



THE BAQĪ' CEMETERY

PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

·MOHAMMED AL-HILLI

**THE CENTURIES OLD STRUGGLE FOR
TRUTH AND JUSTICE COMES TO THE FORE
AS THE FORMER GLORY OF THIS GARDEN IS
INTRICATELY UNEARTHED**

A compelling read awaits as the author delves into the enigmas surrounding the oldest Islamic cemetery in the world - the Garden of Baqī' in Medina, Saudi Arabia. Reaching deep into history, this book offers an insight into this famed cemetery and details the many revered personalities (including the family of Prophet Muhammad (s) and his companions) who are buried within its confines.

Full of colourful images and detailed maps, this is the first detailed book in English on Baqī' and is a must-read for anyone who wishes to visit or learn more about this cemetery.

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MOHAMMED AL-HILLI

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Please recite Surah Fateha for Al-Hajj Abdul Rasul and family, as well as Al-Hajj Hassanali Rajwani and Family.

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TRANSLITERATION TABLE

The method of transliteration of Islamic terminology from the Arabic language has been carried out according to the transliteration table below.

ا	a, i, or u (initial form)	ل	l
ء	' (medial or final form)	م	m
ا	a	ن	n
ب	b	ه	h
پ	p	و	w (v may be used for Farsi)
ت	t	ي	y
ث	th	ه	h (without <i>idāfah</i>)
ج	j	ه	t (with <i>idāfah</i>)
چ	ch		
ح	ḥ	الـ	al-
خ	kh		
د	d	ـ	a
ذ	dh	ـ	i (e may be used for Farsi)
ر	r	ـ	u (o may be used for Farsi)
ز	z		
ژ	zh	ا / ا / ا	ā
س	s	ي	ī
ش	sh	و	ū
ص	ṣ	ا	'a (medial form)
ض	ḍ		
ط	ṭ	ي	ay
ظ	ẓ	ي	ayy
ع	ʿ	ي	iyy (medial form)
غ	gh	ي	i (final form)
ف	f	و	aw
ق	q	و	aww
ك	k	و	uww
گ	g		

- (swt) - Glorious and Exalted is He.
 (s) - Peace be upon him and his family.
 (a) - Peace be upon him/her/them.
 (AH) - After migration of the Prophet (s) to Medina from Mekkah.



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST COMPASSIONATE, THE MOST MERCIFUL

DEDICATION

*To the grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad (s) who was the
epitome of generosity and kindness.*

*To the son of the Master of Martyrs who displayed excellence in
devotion and sincerity.*

*To the fifth Imam of the Ahl al-Bayt who split the kernels of
knowledge.*

*To the truthful teacher who magnificently disseminated teachings
and disciplines far and wide.*

To my masters:

Imam al-Ḥasan al-Mujtabā (a)

Imam 'Alī al-Sajjād (a)

Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (a)

and Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (a)

*to whom I dedicate this small work, seeking their intercession
on the Day of Reckoning and asking the Almighty (swt) to
allow me to witness the day their shrines in Jannat al-Baqī'
are rebuilt once again.*



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CONTENTS

Foreword, *i*

Preface, *iii*

Chapter 1: *The Background*, 1

Chapter 2: *The Prophet Muḥammad (s) and Baqī'*, 5

Chapter 3: *The Merits of visiting Baqī'*, 15

Chapter 4: *Who is buried in Baqī'?*, 19

Chapter 5: *Historical Development*, 31

Chapter 6: *Shrines of personalities of Ahlul-Sunnah*, 57

Chapter 7: *Important Questions*, 61

Chapter 8: *The Destruction of Baqī'*, 71

Chapter 9: *The Baqī' Cemetery Today*, 89

Chapter 10: *The Future of Baqī'*, 93

Chapter 11: *The Building of Shrines in Islam*, 111

Chapter 12: *Seeking blessings (Tabarruk)*, 133

Chapter 13: *Etiquettes of Ziyarah*, 147

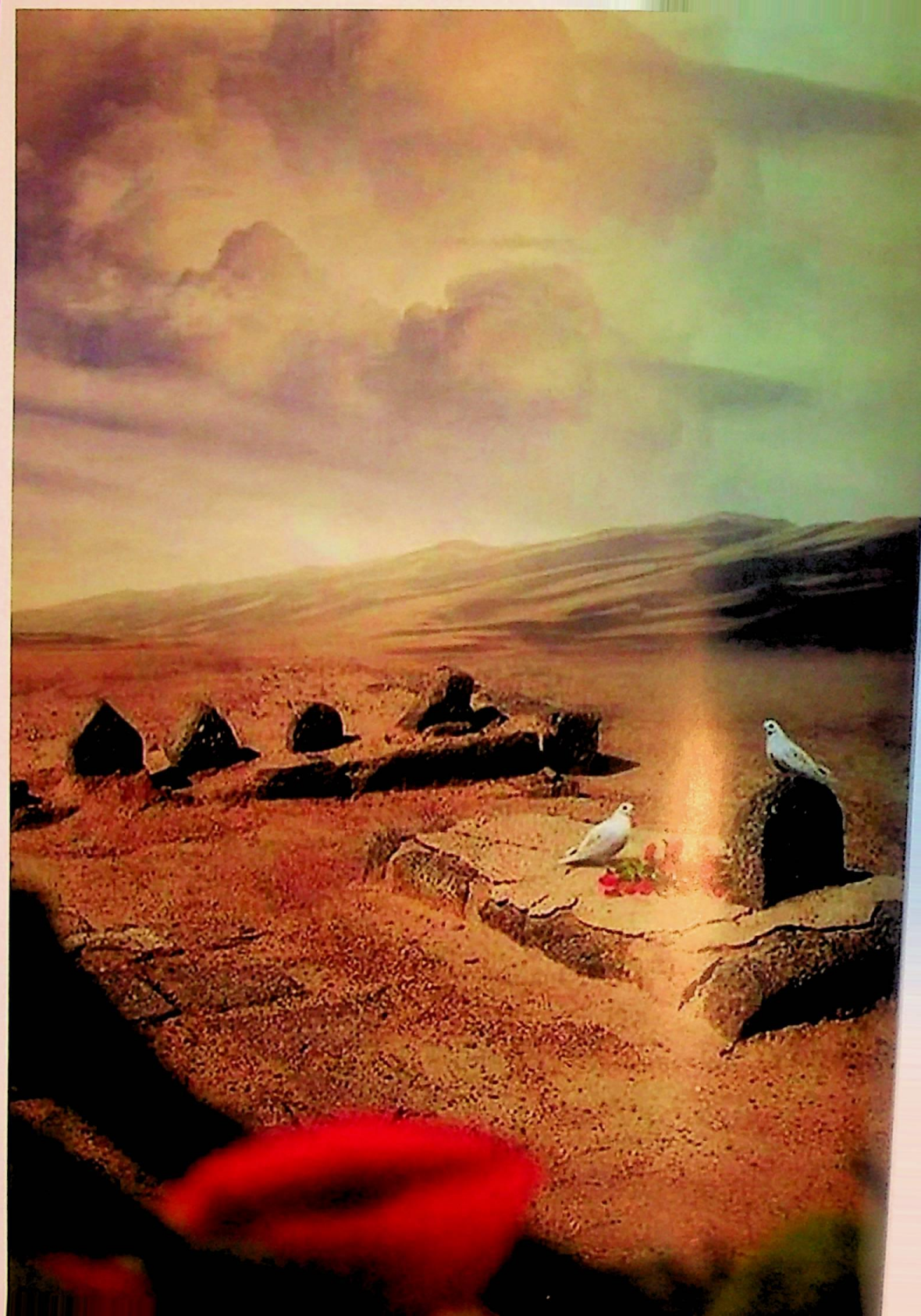
Appendix 1: *Demanding to Rebuild, Restore and Preserve*, 153

Appendix 2: *Poems in Remembrance of Baqī'*, 156

Appendix 3: *Ziyarah of the Imams of Baqī'*, 163

Bibliography, 176

The Baqī' Cemetery Map, 181



FOREWORD

By Dr Sayed Ammar Nakshawani

The ruins of the once illustrious Baqī' Cemetery are today little more than dust and jutting rocks. Due to the importance of Mekkah and Medina to Islam, the very public destruction of Jannat al-Baqī' sent shock waves throughout the Muslim world and continues to receive heightened attention today. The deliberate destruction of the tombs belonging to the Holy Household and companions of the Prophet (s) in Jannat al-Baqī' (Medina) and Jannat al-Mu'allā (Mekkah)¹ drew a sharp parallel with the attack on the tomb of Imam al-Husayn (a) in Karbala. This heinous act occurred on the anniversary of Ghadīr Khum in 1801 and stripped the city of its splendid donated riches and left many dead.

These practices are still on display across the Middle East today, where the tombs of the Imams and their companions have been repeatedly subject to bombings. Innocent Shias, Sunnis, Yazidis (Īzādīs), and Christians are the target of suicide attacks – a tactic which also spilled over into the West in horrific attacks on innocent citizens. These appalling and ongoing tragedies should provide an opportunity and a wake-up call to strive beyond our different beliefs and respect each other's rights as people of all faiths, to peacefully co-exist without fear of retribution based on religious belief and practice.

Remember, in this vein, that Jannat al-Baqī' is not solely for the Shia. It is for all Muslims – and for all of humanity. These tombs are places of respect and sites of worship, just like any mosque or holy space except that they are exceptional due to the people for whom they are constructed. The reconstruction of Jannat al-Baqī' will be the first step to foster greater unity amongst Muslims and demonstrate the power to rise above the issues which divide the *ummah*. If the Muslim world cannot rebuild Jannat al-Baqī' and Jannat al-Mu'allā, how will it rebuild itself as a unified *ummah* and civilisation?

The school of thought behind the demolishing of the tombs of the family of the Prophet (s) considered *tawwasul*, or intercession of holy deceased figures in praying to God, to be an act of polytheism (*shirk*). Most Islamic schools of thought and practice,

1 The oldest cemetery in Mekkah where many of the Prophet's forefathers are buried.

however, have historically used tombs as sites of sanctity since the Qur'an states:

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمُوتَ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾

'Do not say of those who are slain in the way of Allah that they are dead.

Instead, they are alive, but you do not perceive'

(Holy Qur'an, 2:154)

Praying at a tomb, in other words, is akin to asking the living to intercede to Allah on one's behalf.

The ruins of al-Baqi', as unfortunate as they are, represent opportunities to rebuild severed relationships. Al-Baqi' is representative of the severe challenges facing the Muslim world today and should be a testament to the hard work that lies ahead in creating a harmonious society which accepts diversity. For many, the destruction of Baqi' has strengthened the love towards the family and the righteous companions of the Prophet (s) and we pray that, one day, Baqi' will be reconstructed just as it once was and everyone will be free to pray in these revered spaces as they have for centuries. We pray that all our brothers and sisters in humanity, if not in faith, will join us in prayer and tolerance.

The undertaking of this book, which focuses on various dimensions of the legacy of the Baqi' Cemetery, is a highly important endeavour. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Sheikh Mohammed al-Hilli for his hard work. This work will remain an important contribution to the ongoing efforts to raise awareness of al-Baqi' and we pray – through the intercession of the blessed infallible personages of the Ahl al-Bayt – for the success of Sheikh al-Hilli and all those who contributed to this work, both in this world and the next.

Sayed Ammar Nakshawani

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March 2017

PREFACE

One of the trends clearly identified throughout the history of mankind is the reverence and attention offered towards saints and people of influence. It is not unusual to witness, across many countries, shrines and statues honouring those whom people have deemed worthy of respect and remembrance. This is not confined to a certain culture or religious background, but has been accepted universally as a method of adulation for generations.

The Meiji Shrine, which is found in Japan, is one such example. It was originally built in honour of Japan's first modern emperor, Emperor Meiji and is now one of Tokyo's most popular destinations, with 30 million visiting it annually.¹ Similarly, the St. Peter's Basilica, found within Vatican City in Rome, is a coveted destination for Roman Catholics and is also visited by millions.

This emphasis stems from the natural human instinct to learn about the people of the past and their lives, as well as methods of survival. Human beings yearn to understand historical events, personalities and the complex world of human interaction. Visiting these holy sites brings about a sense of connection and relevance, since it induces within the visitors a desire to be inquisitive and to find out information relating to the site, as well as the people associated with it. Hence, many such sites will have guided tours and brochures, as well as shops where people can purchase items such as books and memorabilia.

The determined effort by governments and institutions to preserve and expand a vast array of shrines across the world is palpable. Millions of dollars have been spent annually to achieve this objective. Some shrines have received incredibly large public donations for renovation and preservation. For example, it is estimated that in the US alone during 2015, over \$119 billion was donated by people to such places of worship.²

The Holy Qur'an places much importance on historical events and people of the past, with the main objective being to learn valuable lessons and not to repeat the mistakes

1 Japan National Tourism Organisation (JNTO). www.jnto.go.jp. Accessed 3 March 2017.

2 Giving USA, *Giving USA 2016: The Annual Report on Philanthropy for the Year 2015*. <http://www.charitynavigator.org>.

of history. For example:

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلُ كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ
مُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

*'Travel over the land and then observe how was the fate of those who were before
[you], most of whom were polytheists'*
(Holy Qur'an, 30:42).

The stories of twenty-five Prophets, plus other accounts of personalities whom the Almighty (swt) deemed significant for people to ponder upon, have been detailed in the Qur'an. Undoubtedly, the command is to invite humankind to place themselves in the position of those individuals, and to seek to analyse how they would have reacted when faced with the challenges.

Association with the past is therefore not only intrinsic to human nature but is firmly encouraged within Islam as well. This connection is greatly enhanced upon visiting the shrines of revered individuals and researching details about their lives.

In the Muslim world, shrines have been built and regularly visited for hundreds of years. From Jerusalem to Tunisia, and from Turkey to Bahrain, Muslims have recognised the importance of the preservation of these mausoleums – ultimately serving as places of worship of the Almighty (swt). The shrines are considered as places of great spirituality - not simply places for supplicating to Allah (swt) and to pay respect to the holy people buried there - but also to remember our onward journey after death.

In Egypt, for example, I personally visited several shrines across the city of Cairo. These include the shrine of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a), the shrine of Lady Zaynab (a), the shrine of Imam Zayn al-'Ābidīn (a) and the shrine of Lady Nafisah. Other popular shrines include that of Sultan Ḥasan, the *Mamlūk* ruler who lived in the fourteenth century. These places are visited by millions, and have been renovated to the highest standards. Similar shrines can be found in India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia as well as Turkey.

This practice is not recent and, in fact, has existed since the early days of Islam. Interestingly, Ibn Taymiyyah (d.1328), who has himself strongly advocated shrine demolition, admits in his work *Iqtidā' al-Ṣirāt al-Mustaqīm li-Mukhālifat Aṣḥāb al-*

Jahīm that the construction over the grave of Prophet Ibrāhīm (a) in Hebron existed at the time of the companions of the Prophet Muḥammad (s). He notes that people used to visit it and pray there, whilst some stayed away.³

The land of Hijaz (modern-day Saudi Arabia) encompasses the holiest cities for Muslims. The cities of Mekkah and Medina occupy a very central position in Islamic teachings, where the Holy Ka'bah and the grave and mosque of Prophet Muḥammad (s) are found respectively. Each year millions undertake the journey to both cities during the hajj and for *'umrah*.

Being the birthplace of Islam, this land contains many historic sites of great importance in relation to the life of the Prophet (s) and his family, as well as the companions. Included in this are the mosques and places blessed by these noble individuals, which are found throughout both cities and beyond. In addition, graves of other notable individuals in history are also located in this area. For example, the grave of Ḥawwā (Eve), the wife of Prophet (s) Ādam (a), is found in Jeddah.

Unfortunately, according to the UK-based Islamic Heritage Research Foundation,⁴ over 98% of historical and religious sites in Saudi Arabia have been destroyed since 1985. The Washington based Gulf Institute, states that '95 per cent of the 1,000-year-old buildings in the two cities have been destroyed in the past 20 years.'⁵ In Mekkah the destructions include the House of Khadijah, wife of the Holy Prophet (s), as well as the Cemetery of al-Mu'allā. The houses of the family of the Prophet (s) were destroyed in both cities. In Medina, the Baqī' Cemetery and the shrine of Ḥamzah (the Prophet's uncle) in Uḥud were callously reduced to rubble. 'It's as if they wanted to wipe out history,' says Ali al-Ahmed, of the Institute for Gulf Affairs in Washington, D.C.⁶

The Saudi government, under the pretext of expansion, has slowly eroded the exceptionally rich history of Hijaz. Several multibillion-dollar deals have been signed by the Saudis with contractors to expand the two mosques in Medina and Mekkah, due to the increasing number of pilgrims every year. Tourism and economic promise are being used as a cover for the destruction of these historical sites. The real reason, however, stems from ideology.

3 *Iqtiḍā' al-Ṣirāt al-Mustaḳīm li-Mukhālifat Aṣḥāb al-Jahīm*, p. 676–7.

4 Carla Power, 'Saudi Arabia Bulldozes Over Its Heritage,' *Time*, 14 November 2014. <http://www.time.com/3584585/saudi-arabia-bulldozes-over-its-heritage>. Accessed 3 March 2017.

5 *Between Cultural Diversity and Common Heritage*, p. 324.

6 Carla Power, 'Saudi Arabia Bulldozes Over Its Heritage.'

In the eighteenth century a man by the name of Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb (d.1792) managed to strike a pact with Muḥammad ibn Sa'ūd and the first Saudi state was thus formed. His teachings, inspired by the fourteenth century theologian Aḥmad ibn Taymiyyah, were termed 'Wahhabism.' The ideology was based on strict and unwavering views, including the rejection of all forms of mediation between God and His believers, as well as the denouncing of the construction of shrines and tombs. Visiting and honouring shrines and mausoleums was considered blasphemous and akin to polytheism, and so the systematic destruction of shrines across Hijaz and beyond was soon instigated.

For over 200 years, this ideology, which is considered the dominant belief system in Saudi Arabia today, has sought to obliterate any shrine or historically significant site within the country. This ideology has not been restricted to Saudi Arabia only, as billions of dollars have been spent for spreading the teachings of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb across the world.

The destruction of many religious sites, such as the shrine of Prophet Yūnus (Jonah) in 2014 in Mosul (Iraq) by Daesh (ISIS), the attack and blowing up of the 'Askarī shrine in 2006 on two separate occasions, and the destruction of the shrines of 'Ammār ibn Yāsir and Uways Qarānī in Raqqah (Syria), are a few examples of how this ideology has inspired others to implement its teachings even outside of Saudi Arabia.⁷

There have also been attempts to destroy or move the green dome situated above the grave of the Prophet Muḥammad (s). For example, a pamphlet published in 2007 by the Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs, endorsed by 'Abd al-'Azīz Āl Sheikh, the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, stated that 'the green dome shall be demolished and the three graves flattened in the Prophet's Masjid.'⁸ In 2014, Time Magazine reported that, 'A 61-page report, published recently in Saudi Arabia's *Journal of the Royal Presidency*, suggested separating the Prophet's tomb from Medina's mosque.'⁹ These reports are not surprising, since the current position of the green dome above the tomb of the Prophet (s) is considered unacceptable within the hard-line Salafi teachings espoused

7 Despite these teachings, organisations such as the King 'Abd al-'Azīz Foundation for Research and Archives have preserved and have on display at a Museum the personal belongings of the King. This includes his robe, swords and rifles as well as books.

8 Jerome Taylor, 'Mekkah for the rich: Islam's holiest site "turning into Vegas"', *The Independent*, 23 September 2011. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/Mekkah-for-the-rich-islams-holiest-site-turning-into-vegas-2360114.html>. Accessed 3 March 2017.

9 Carla Power, 'Saudi Arabia Bulldozes Over Its Heritage.'



by Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb and presented by Muftis in Saudi ever since – an issue that will be discussed extensively later in this book.

In September 2014, select UK newspapers, such as *The Independent*, reported on plans by the Saudi rulers to relocate the tomb of the Prophet (s). These plans caused uproar in certain parts of the Muslim world; uproar that was loud and clear on social media platforms. A few days later, the Saudi-backed TV Channel *Al Arabiya* reported that the Saudi authorities were denying these claims. Instead, they commented that the plan was a 'proposal by an academic which was published in a specialised magazine and is not a government decision.'¹⁰

However, two months earlier, Arab media reported that the Saudi king had approved a new expansion project for the Prophet's Mosque, costing \$6 billion.¹¹ Details of the plans remain a secret. Nevertheless, one expert from Medina, who asked to remain anonymous, told me that the drawings of the approved plans include turning the area of the Prophet's grave and chambers into a 'passage only visitation' within the mosque, which would mean that pilgrims would not be able to stop to perform prayers. The passage would allow the visitors to greet the Prophet (s) and leave, ensuring that no prayers take place in that area. This would be in line with Wahhabi ideology, which prohibits worship of God at any place with graves in proximity.

10 'Saudi authority denies plans to destroy Prophet's tomb,' *Al Arabiya English*, 5 September 2014. [http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/2014/09/05/Saudi-authority-denies-plans-to-destroy-Prophet-\(s\)-s-tomb.html](http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/2014/09/05/Saudi-authority-denies-plans-to-destroy-Prophet-(s)-s-tomb.html). Accessed 3 March 2017.

11 'Saudi Arabia plans \$6bn makeover for second holiest site in Islam,' *RT*, 30 October 2012. <https://www.rt.com/news/saudi-arabia-prophet-mosque-615>. Accessed 3 March 2017.

Amongst the shrines that were destroyed on two occasions was that of the famous Baqī' Cemetery in Medina. This area was known in Medina before the arrival of Prophet Muḥammad (s) from Mekkah, yet attained much more importance following frequent visitations by the Prophet (s) himself. Baqī' is also the burial site of thousands of the Prophet's family members and companions. Historical records, as this work will show, clearly demonstrate the existence of many mausoleums and tombs within the cemetery, which were obliterated and demolished in 1925. Since then, the cemetery has no tombs, names, or any clearly identifiable graves noticeable to visitors.

Millions of pilgrims visit the cemetery on an annual basis. Many, however, are oblivious of the identity of the graves and simply walk around the cemetery unaware of who is in fact buried there. Some of the Shia, on the other hand, normally carry maps which detail the prominent individuals buried within certain sections of Baqī'. At the same time, many feel a great sense of sadness, often resulting in tears, when they see the state of the graves of the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt, four of whom are buried in this cemetery. Visitors often leave Baqī' with frustration and anger, wondering why such evident hatred exists towards the family of the Prophet (s). Additionally, any recitation of *ziyārah* (visitation greeting) or eulogies are strongly forbidden. If caught, the visitor risks imprisonment and possible torture. Books of *ziyārah* and phones are frequently confiscated within the cemetery.

Each year, 8 Shawwāl is marked as the Day of Sorrow (*yawm al-ghamm*), when many Shias around the world hold events remembering the day that the Cemetery of Baqī' was destroyed. This is also an occasion for protests and marches, calling for the rebuilding of the shrines and the handing over of the management of the sacred lands to other Muslim countries or to the United Nations.

The aim of this book is to detail the history of the Baqī' Cemetery, outlining the importance placed upon it by the Prophet (s) and the Muslims for over 1,400 years. Detailed accounts of the two destructions of the cemetery are recorded, with various theological discourses discussed about the building of shrines and the seeking of blessings. Furthermore, some etiquettes of visitation, in addition to the recommended *ziyārah* recitations, are also included. The exact wording, including spelling of names, have been kept in their original format as found in those sources.

An important part of this work is the presentation of an excellent project by brother Zuhair Hussaini who, as part of his B.A. thesis, worked on designs for the future rebuilding of the Baqī' shrines, God willing. An entire chapter delves into the

background as well as the suggested designs for the various mausoleums inside Baqī'. Another chapter, by the Baqee organisation (based in the USA) suggests the different ways of conducting effective campaigns for the rebuilding.

I would like to thank Dr Sayed Ammar Nakshawani for his support and eloquent foreword. In addition, my thanks also to Reshma Jaffrey, who meticulously went through the book several times and edited it with attention. Thanks also to Miriam Abedi who helped with the editing. I am grateful to Ruby Jaffrey for her beautiful painting used for the front cover, as well as Nouri Sardar and Abir Safa for the poems relating to Baqī'. Further, I would like to thank Amir Dastmalchian for editing and proof-reading this book. I am also grateful to Haider Jabbar for the excellent graphic design of this book. Finally, my special thanks to al-hajj Hidayat Rasul, who donated generously to the work and publication of the book. May Allah (swt) bless his efforts and reward him abundantly.

The content of this work is a result of several years of research and numerous visits to Medina, in which I have attempted as much as possible to gather accurate information regarding this important place. I welcome any feedback from readers for future editions.

I ask the Almighty (swt) to accept this small work and grant us all the opportunity to see the day that the blessed Jannat (Garden of) al-Baqī' is rebuilt once more.

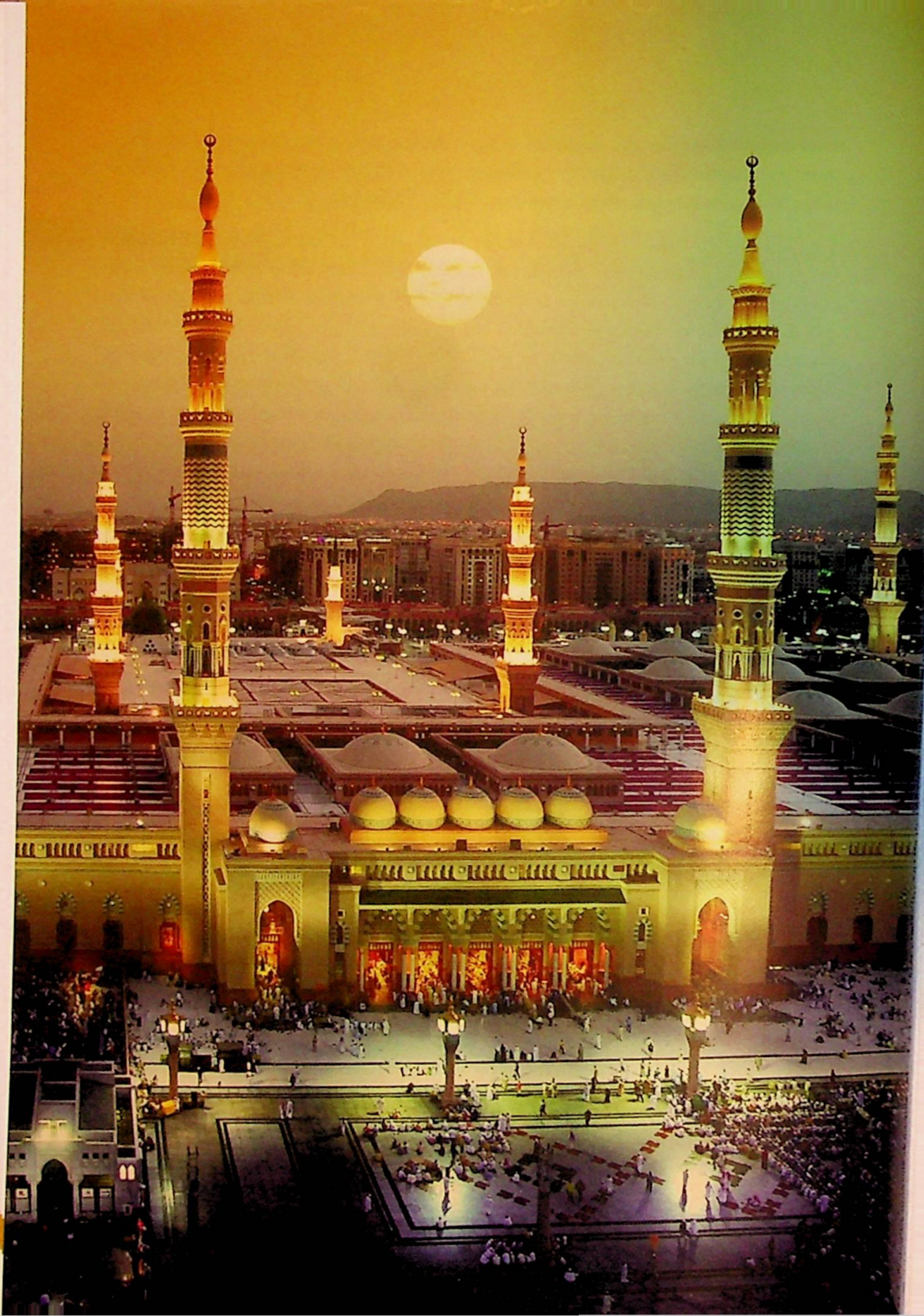
وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ مَنَعَ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذَكَّرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ، وَسَعَىٰ فِي خَرَابِهَا
أُولَٰئِكَ مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا خَائِفِينَ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا
خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١١٤﴾

'Who is a greater wrongdoer than him who denies access to the mosques of Allah lest His Name be celebrated therein, and tries to ruin them? Such people may not enter them, except in fear. There is disgrace for them in this world, and there is for them a great punishment in the hereafter'

(Holy Qur'an, 2:114)

Mohammed al-Hilli

London, UK - 25 Rajab 1438 / 23 April 2017



CHAPTER ONE

THE BACKGROUND

BAQĪ' IN ARABIC

Several Arab lexicographers have discussed the word 'baqī'' within their works. Some, such as Fayrūz 'Ābidī and Jawharī, define it as 'a place of earth (*buq'ah*), wide, usually with trees.'¹ It is also accepted that the word 'baqī'' is used for a place which has remnants of a tree, such as roots or trunks.²

Historically, the word 'baqī'' has been used to describe a few different places in Medina. This includes Baqī' al-Khayl ('baqī'' of horses), whereby a market was found for the buying and selling of horses in proximity to the house of Zayd ibn Thābit.³ Others include Baqī' al-Khabkhabah, Baqī' Zubayr, and Baqī' al-Ghurāb. However, with the burial of the companions and the family of the Prophet (s) in the Cemetery of Baqī', the other areas in Medina eventually lost their association with this name.

The cemetery is known as 'Baqī' al-Gharqad' (the field of thorny trees) due to the type of tree that was found within the area. It is popularly known as 'Jannat al-Baqī'' (the Garden of Baqī'), due to the burial of honourable people within its confines.

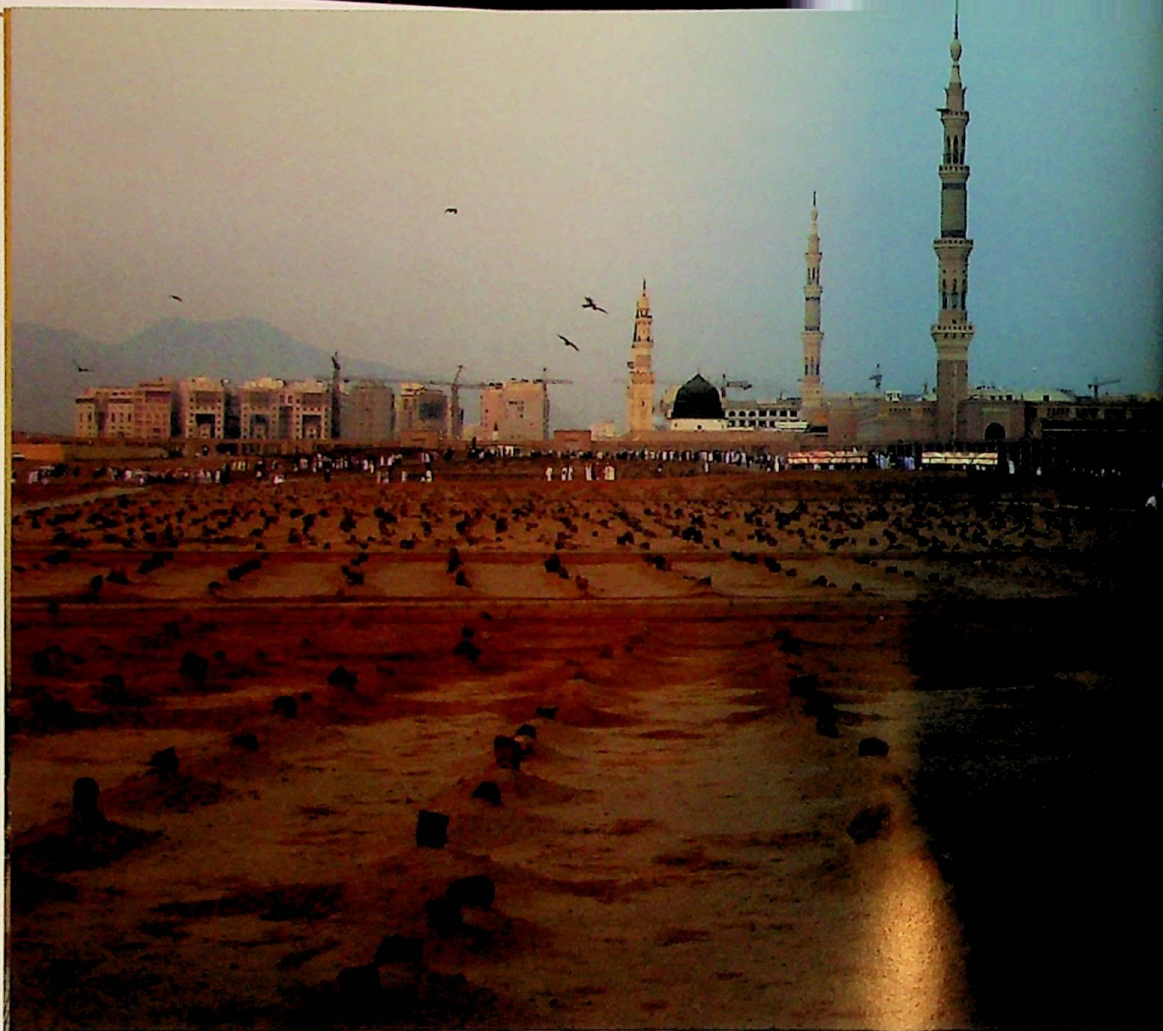
Before the migration of Prophet Muḥammad (s) to Medina, Baqī' was a vast garden situated in the western side of Yathrib.⁴ Interestingly, some historical records point to Baqī' as being referenced in the Bible:

1 *Al-Baqī' al-Gharqad fī Dirāsah Shāmilah*, p. 16.

2 *Mir'āt al-Haramayn*, vol. 1, p. 425.

3 *Akhhār al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*, p. 306.

4 The name of Medina before the migration of the Prophet (s).



Sa'id al-Maqbari narrates: 'When Mus'ab ibn Zubayr arrived in Medina (for hajj or *'umrah*), he headed towards the Baqi' Cemetery. He was accompanied by Ra's al-Jalut, who upon casting his eyes on the cemetery said: "It is it!"'

When asked to elaborate, he said: 'We find in the book of God a description of a cemetery whose west is filled with trees and east with houses. From it God will resurrect 70,000 people with illuminating faces like that of the Moon. I have been around the Earth visiting cemeteries and have not noticed anything that matches this (description) other than (Baqi').'⁵

5 *Umdat al-Akhbār fī Madinat al-Mukhtār*, p. 150.



LOCATION AND SIZE

The Baqī' Cemetery is the largest cemetery in the city of Medina, and is thought to house the graves of at least 10,000 companions.⁶ None of these graves are identified or marked today. Located in the heart of Medina, right next to the mosque of Prophet Muḥammad (s), the cemetery has three doors. One is found on the eastern side, another on the north, whilst the main entrance is on the west. The latter is used daily for the burial of the many inhabitants of Medina who have passed away, as well as being the main entrance for the visitors of the cemetery.

The area between the Prophet's Mosque and Baqī' is known as '*bayn al-ḥaramayn*'. The

6 *Āthār al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*, p. 171.

houses of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) were here and it was referred to as '*Mahallat Banī Hāshim*' (the area of Banī Hāshim), where certain markets and traders would engage in buying and selling. None of these stalls or landmarks remain today, however, as all have been destroyed.

Historically, the size of Baqī' is said to have been 80m² initially, but since its expansion in 1373 AH, the size today has grown to approximately 175,000m².

THE VIRTUES OF BAQĪ'

There is no doubt that some places and sites occupy an important position in Islamic teachings, especially when they are associated with noble and inspirational guides for humanity. The Cemetery of Baqī' is certainly amongst the best of these places, having been visited on many occasions by the Holy Prophet (s) himself, in addition to his pure progeny (the Ahl al-Bayt). This significance is deepened by the fact that some of their pure bodies and that of thousands of companions and martyrs are buried there.

The Prophet Muḥammad (s) is narrated to have said:

From this cemetery (i.e. Baqī') emerges a light that will illuminate the heavens and the Earth.⁷

It is also narrated that the Holy Prophet (s) said:

Verily Allah (swt) will command, on the Day of Resurrection, that Juhūn⁸ and Baqī' are taken and placed in Paradise,⁹ and those who are buried in our cemetery (Baqī') will attain my intercession.¹⁰

Umm Qays narrates that she saw the Prophet (s) in the Cemetery of Baqī' and said:

O Umm Qays (...) do you see this Cemetery (...) From it 70,000 will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment illuminated like moonlight. They will enter Paradise without reckoning.¹¹

7 Ibid., p. 172.

8 The Famous cemetery in Makkah where Khadijah (a) is buried.

9 *Al-Kunā wa al-Alqāb*, vol. 1, p. 371.

10 *Sunan al-Nisā* 7, vol. 1, p. 602.

11 *Al-Mustadrak 'alā al-Sahīḥayn*, vol. 4, p. 68. *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, vol. 12, p. 262.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PROPHET MUḤAMMAD (S) AND BAQĪ^c

Prophet Muḥammad (s) himself often visited the cemetery. He would frequently exclaim that he was commanded to seek forgiveness for those buried in Baqī'. 'Ā'ishah, one of the wives of the Holy Prophet (s), narrates:

The Prophet (s) used to leave his bed at night. I would follow him, and see that he entered Baqī'. He used to stay there for a while, raising his hands to the heavens whilst praying for the people of Baqī' and seeking forgiveness for them. Upon his return, I asked him regarding this, to which he replied: 'I have been commanded to pray for them.'¹

She also narrates:

I asked (the Prophet (s)): How do I greet them (i.e., the people of Baqī')? He replied, 'Say: Peace be upon you O Inhabitants of this land from the believers and Muslims. May Allah (swt) have mercy upon those who have left this world and those who will eventually leave. We will, God willing, join you.'²

Ibn Ḥajar narrates that the Holy Prophet (s) is also reported to have performed prayers inside Baqī': 'The Prophet (s) went inside the centre of Baqī', and performed prayers there.'³ According to Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), the Prophet (s) used to go to Baqī' every Thursday evening, reciting: 'Peace be upon you, O inhabitants of this place. May the mercy of God be upon you (three times).'⁴

1 *Tārīkh Ibn Shabbah*, vol. 1, p. 89–90.

2 *Sunan al-Nisā'ī*, vol. 4, p. 91.

3 *Al-Iṣābah fī Tamayyūz al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 7, p. 367.

4 *Wasā'il al-Shi'ah*, vol. 3, p. 224.

Bashīr ibn al-Khaṣāṣiyya narrates:

I came to see the Prophet (s) and thereafter he invited me to embrace Islam. He asked me, 'What is your name?'

I replied, 'Nathīr.'

The Prophet (s) then said: 'It is Bashīr.'

He allowed me to stay at the Ṣaffā, whereby he gave us charity and gifts that he received. One night, he left towards Baqī' and I followed him. I heard him (s) say: 'Peace be upon the place of the believers. We will join you soon. We are from Allah (swt) and to Him we shall return. You have achieved vast goodness, and avoided prolonged evil.'⁵

The Prophet (s) used to visit the Baqī' Cemetery regularly, even towards the end of his blessed life. Narrations point to him being helped by Imam 'Alī (a) and a group of Muslims when he fell ill. They also accompanied him when he visited Baqī' and prayed for those buried there.⁶

5 *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, vol. 13, p. 299.

6 *Kitāb al-Irshād*, vol. 2, p. 180.



The above narrations and many more highlight the importance the Prophet of Islam placed on the Cemetery of Baqī' and its visitation. He would often go there at night, particularly Thursday nights. Some narrations also point to special nights of the year when the Prophet (s) visited Baqī'.

The Holy Prophet Muḥammad (s) narrates:

I was asleep on the night of 15 Sha'bān. Jibrīl came to me and said, 'Oh Muḥammad, are you sleeping on a night like this? I asked: 'Which night is it?' He replied: 'It is the night of 15 Sha'bān.' I stood up then went to Baqī'. Jibrīl then said: 'Raise your head, since it is the night that the heavens open up their doors, and gates of mercy, forgiveness, virtue, blessings, generosity, and righteousness will be opened.'⁷

THE PROPHET (S) USED TO PRAY IN BAQĪ'

Ibn 'Asākir narrates:

The Messenger of Allah (s) went to Baqī' al-Gharqad and prostrated. He recited the following: 'I seek refuge in You, Glory be to You, I am unable to fulfil gratitude to You, You are the way You have praised Yourself.'

Jibrīl then descended and said: '*Oh Muḥammad, raise your head to the heavens.*'

The Prophet (s) did so, and noticed the gates of the heavens wide open. Written on one of them was: 'Success for the worshippers on such a night', on the other: 'Success to the one who prostrates during this night', and the third: 'Success for the one who bows down this night.'⁸

Ibn Ḥajar narrates that the Messenger of Allah (s) once went to Baqī' and prayed there.⁹ Many other narrations also indicate this occurrence.¹⁰ For example, a long narration by al-Muttaqī al-Hindī details how the Holy Prophet (s) performed the prayers of rain inside Baqī'.¹¹ This is particularly important since today visitors are forbidden to

7 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 95, p. 413.

8 *Tārīkh Damishq*, vol. 51, p. 72.

9 *Al-Iṣābah fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 7, p. 367.

10 *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, vol. 1, p. 489. *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, vol. 4, p. 388. *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 3, p. 275.

11 *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, vol. 8, p. 436.

perform any form of prayers inside the Baqī' Cemetery (from the time the shrines were destroyed in 1925).

Historical accounts have also established that the Prophet (s) took part in the funeral processions of those who passed away and were buried in this cemetery. For example, when the famous companion Sa'd ibn Mu'āḍ passed away, the Holy Prophet (s) took part in his funeral in Baqī'.¹²

Similarly, when news reached the Prophet of the death of Negus (Najāshī), the Abyssinian king who had welcomed the Muslims as refugees for so many years, the Prophet (s) and some of his companions left for Baqī' where they performed the funeral prayers in *absentia*.¹³ This was close to the year 8 AH.

HADITH INSIDE THE BAQĪ' CEMETERY

1. 'Oh 'Alī, shall I grant you good tidings? Jibrīl was with me and informed me that the Qā'im will emerge at the end of time, filling the Earth with justice, as it will be filled with tyranny and injustice. He is from your progeny, a son from al-Ḥusayn (...)'¹⁴
2. One day Bilāl was walking with the Prophet (s) in Baqī'. The Prophet (s) asked: 'Bilāl, do you hear what I'm hearing?' Bilāl replied: 'No, by Allah, O Messenger of God!' The Prophet (s) said: 'Do you not hear the people of the grave being tortured?'¹⁵
3. Whilst in Baqī', the Prophet Muḥammad (s) was heard saying: 'The (reward) of the one who eats and displays gratitude is like that of the fasting one who is patient.'¹⁶

12 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 3, p. 432.

13 *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, vol. 1, p. 490.

14 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 51, p. 76.

15 *Al-Mustadrak 'alā al-Sahīḥayn*, vol. 1, p. 40.

16 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 422.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE AHL AL-BAYT WITH BAQĪ' CEMETERY

Following in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet (s), the Ahl al-Bayt continued the special relationship with Baqī'. Ibn 'Abbās narrates that 'One moonlit night, 'Alī took my hands and went to Baqī' after 'ishā'. He asked me to recite. I recited the *bismillah*. He then gave me the secrets of the letter 'b' (in the Arabic alphabet) until *fajr*.'¹⁷

Following the martyrdom of Lady Fāṭimah (a), it is reported that Imam 'Alī (a) came to Baqī' and dug a few graves.¹⁸ This was done out of respect for her wish that her grave remains hidden. Sheikh al-Ṣadūq narrates that Lady Fāṭimah (a) had a place inside Baqī' where she would perform prayers.¹⁹

Indeed, as described later, Imam 'Alī (a) allocated a place for the honourable Lady to weep for the loss of her father in Baqī'. This was known as Bayt al-Aḥzān (House of Sorrows).²⁰ Narrations also point to Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) visiting Baqī' on several occasions.²¹ One of these was when 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān became the caliph for the Muslims. Allāmah al-Ṭabarsī narrates:

Abū Sufyān took the hands of al-Ḥusayn and requested that he is taken to Baqī'. Once there and amidst the graves, Abū Sufyān let go and shouted: 'O people of the graves, what you fought us over is now in our hands, whilst you are dust.'

Imam al-Ḥusayn told him: 'May Allah disgrace your elderly age and your face!'

He left him there, and if it was not for Nu'mān ibn Bashīr, he (i.e., Abū Sufyān) would have died there.²²

17 *Mustadrak Saḥīḥ al-Biḥār*, vol. 1, p. 269.

18 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 20, p. 349.

19 *Man Lā Yaḥḍurahu al-Faqīh*, vol. 2, p. 577.

20 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 43, p. 177.

21 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 8, p. 228.

22 *Al-Ihtijāj*, vol. 1, p. 409.

* Central image: Arabic calligraphy: "Peace be upon you O' Imams of Baqī'"

Qāsim, the son of Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr, says: I once saw a young man, whose face was brighter than the sun, crying next to the graves of Imam al-Ḥasan and 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn. Upon answering me with wisdom, I enquired about his identity. He replied: 'I am Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn, and this is the grave of my father.'²³

Some scholars have reported that Imam al-Bāqir (a) was seen supplicating in Baqī' and reciting Sūrat al-Qadr (Chapter 97) seven times.²⁴

Several other narrations relating to the visitation of the Imams and their association with Baqī' are also found in the Hadith literature.

THE PROMINENT PEOPLE BURIED DURING THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET (S)

In the year 1 AH, As'ad ibn Zurārah, from the Khazraj tribe, was the first companion to have been buried here. He was from the Anṣār (helpers) and passed away nine months after the arrival of the Prophet (s) in Medina. According to the historian al-Samhūdī, he was the first of 10,000 companions of the Prophet (s) to be buried in this cemetery.²⁵

The first companion from the migrants to be buried in Baqī' was 'Uthmān ibn Maz'ūn. A narration from Imam 'Alī (a) confirms this:

The first to be buried in Baqī' was 'Uthmān ibn Maz'ūn, followed by Ibrāhīm, the son of the Messenger of Allah.²⁶

Known for his ascetic life, 'Uthmān was close to the Prophet (s), and had a good relationship with Imam 'Alī (a). Narrations point out that Imam 'Alī (a) chose to name one of his sons as 'Uthmān due to this individual.²⁷

'Uthmān ibn Maz'ūn was amongst the group of Muslims who first migrated to Abyssinia, after enduring torment and abuse from the Quraysh in Mekkah. In the Median period, he took part in the Battle of Badr with the Prophet (s) and, later

23 *Tārīkh Damishq*, vol. 54, p. 281.

24 *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*, vol. 6, p. 105.

25 *Wafā al-Wafā*, vol. 3, p. 810.

26 *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 1, p. 141.

27 *Al-Mazār al-Kabīr*, p. 489.



'Uthmān ibn Maz'ūn (considered by some as grave of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān)

that year (2 AH), he fell ill and passed away. Many narrations inform us that the Holy Prophet (s) wept and prayed for him.²⁸ The Prophet (s) performed the prayer of the deceased over his body and took part in his funeral, as well as his burial, in Baqī'. He then placed a rock on the grave to distinguish it from others and visited the grave on various occasions.²⁹ Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam later removed the rock, when he was the governor of Medina,³⁰ as he did not want the grave of Ibn Maz'ūn to be identified. Today, many have mistaken the grave of 'Uthmān ibn Maz'ūn to be that of the third caliph, 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān.³¹ It is likely that the grave visited by many Muslims in central Baqī' today is that of 'Uthmān ibn Maz'ūn and not of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān.

In the year 4 AH, the mother of Imam 'Alī (a), Fāṭimah bint Asad, was buried in Baqī'. After Khadijah, she was the second lady to follow the religion of Islam and support the Prophet (s). The Holy Prophet (s) referred to her as his own mother, and used his cloak to wrap her body when she passed away in order to assuage her fears regarding the squeezing of the grave. He also lay down in her grave before she was placed inside, and

28 *Al-Kāfī*, vol. 3, p. 161.

29 *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, vol. 1, p. 498. *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 3, p. 600.

30 *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 893–894.

31 See p. 39. 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān was buried outside Baqī', thereafter due to expansion, his grave became included inside the cemetery.

recited the funeral prayers and Qur'an for her.³² When the Prophet (s) placed Fāṭimah bint Asad in her grave, he began speaking next to her head and said:

O Fāṭimah, when the angels Munkar and Nakir ask you about your Lord, say: 'Allah is He, Muḥammad is my Prophet (s), Islam is my religion, the Qur'an is my book, my son is my Imam and *walī* (authority over me).'

Then the Prophet (s) prayed for Fāṭimah.³³

Her grave is adjacent to the four Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt and 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. Many non-Shia historians believe her grave is that of Lady Fāṭimah (a), the daughter of the Prophet (s).³⁴

In the year 5 AH, the head of the Aws tribe in Medīna, Sa'd ibn Mu'āḍ, passed away. He embraced Islam before the migration and took part in the Battle of Badr. It is narrated that the Prophet (s) prayed over his body and informed people that thousands of angels joined the prayers. When asked about the reason, the Prophet (s) said: 'He used to recite (Sūrah) Qul (i.e., al-Ikhlāṣ) whilst standing, sitting, riding, walking (...)'³⁵ The grave of Sa'd ibn Mu'āḍ is found next to that of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (towards the end of Baqī').

In the year 10 AH, Ibrāhīm, the son of the Prophet Muḥammad (s) and Mary the Copt, tragically died and was buried in Baqī'. He was a mere 18 months old, and the Prophet (s) wept profusely after his death. Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) narrates that, when

32 *Wasā'il al-Shi'ah*, vol. 3, p. 48, *abwāb al-takfīn*.

33 *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 176, *abwāb al-dafn*.

34 Shia scholars are generally of the opinion that the grave of Faṭimah (a) is hidden, and is likely to be close to the grave of the Prophet (s).

35 *Al-Kāfi*, vol. 2, p. 622, h. 13.



Ibrāhīm passed away, the Prophet's eyes were filled with tears. The Prophet (s) then said:

The eyes are tearful and the heart is sorrowful, but we do not say that which displeases our Lord. O Ibrāhīm we are indeed saddened (by your departure).

The Prophet (s) ordered for his son to be buried close to 'Uthmān ibn Maz'ūn. Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm (a) is narrated to have said:

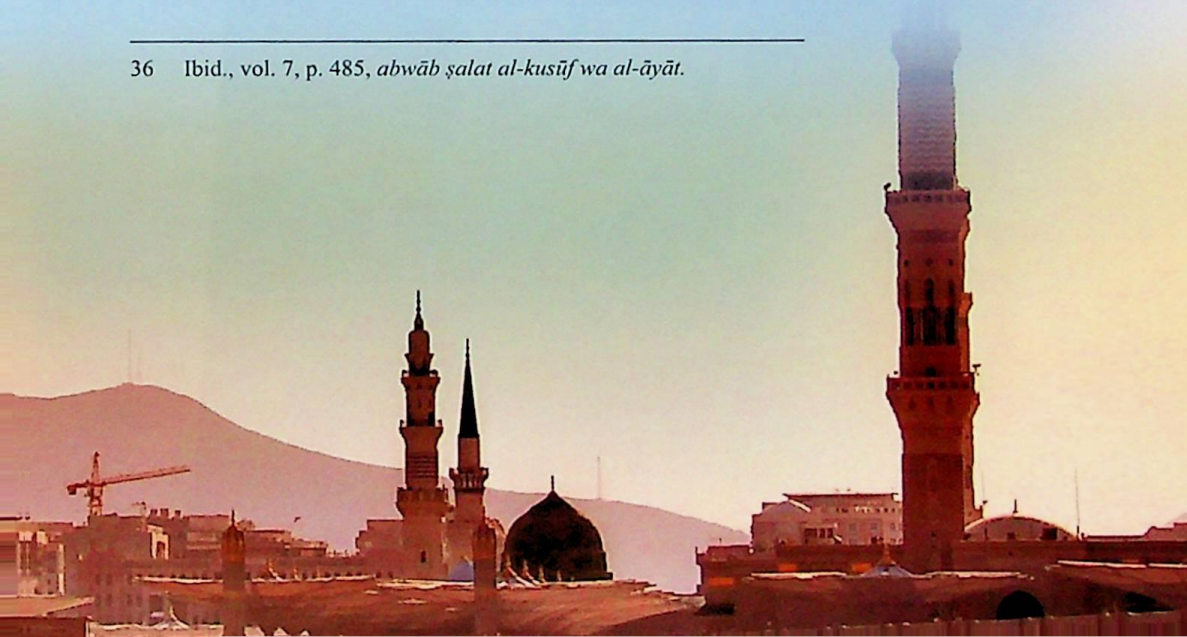
When Ibrāhīm, the son of the Prophet (s), died, a solar eclipse occurred. People thereafter mentioned the death to be the reason. The Prophet (s) went up the pulpit, praised Allah and said:

O people, the Sun and the Moon are signs of God that move by His command. They do not eclipse when people die nor when they are born. If any of them eclipses, then pray.

Thereafter he led the people for the prayers of eclipse.³⁶

Some historians have mentioned that, after the burial of Ibrāhīm in Baqī', the cemetery became the popular choice of burial for the people of Medina. Tribes used to pluck

36 Ibid., vol. 7, p. 485, *abwāb ṣalat al-kusūf wa al-āyāt*.



out trees and roots in parts of the cemetery and level the ground for digging graves. Gradually, the other two cemeteries, namely Banī Salīm and Banī Ḥaram, were less used.³⁷

The three stepdaughters of the Prophet (s) also died during his lifetime,³⁸ although exact dates are disputed. They are all buried in Baqī'. Sheikh al-Kulaynī reports:

When Ruqayyah the daughter of the Prophet (s) passed away, the Prophet (s) ordered her body to be buried in proximity to 'Uthmān ibn Maz'ūn (in Baqī'). Fāṭimah (a) stood next to the grave and cried. The Prophet (s) said: 'I know her weakness, and I have asked Allah to protect her from the squeezing of the grave.'³⁹

37 *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 3, p. 386.

38 They are Zaynab, Umm Kulthūm, and Ruqayyah. Historians and scholars have disputed whether they were actual daughters of the Prophet (s) or his adopted daughters from the sister of Khadījah.

39 *Al-Kāfī*, vol. 3, p. 241.

* Image below: Undated image showing visitors to Baqī' after its destruction in 1925



CHAPTER THREE

THE MERITS OF VISITING BAQĪ^c

Many narrations from the Prophet (s) and his family point to the excellence of visiting the Imams and the noble members of the Prophet's family in this cemetery. Here we cite a few.

Imam al-Riḍā (a) is narrated to have said:

Surely, every Imam has a covenant over their Shia and followers. One of the best ways of displaying loyalty and good action is to visit their graves. Whomsoever visits them, whilst eager in doing so and believing in what they seek, will be one of those who will attain their intercession on the Day of Judgment.¹

Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) said:

Whomsoever visits an Imam, whose obedience is obligatory, he will attain the reward of an accepted hajj.²

Imam al-'Askarī (a) said:

Whomsoever visits Ja'far (al-Ṣādiq) and his father will not suffer from eye ailments nor will they die facing tribulation.³

Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) said:

If anyone of you performs the hajj, let them end the pilgrimage with our visitation,

1 *Rasā'il al-Karakī*, vol. 2, p. 162.

2 *Jawāhir al-Kalām*, vol. 20, p. 87.

3 *Tahrīr al-Aḥkām*, vol. 2, p. 123.

since it completes their pilgrimage.⁴

It is narrated that the Prophet Muḥammad (saw) said, whilst addressing Imam al-Ḥasan (a):

Whomsoever visits you after your death, or visits your father, or visits your brother, Paradise is granted to them.⁵

Ibn 'Abbās narrates that the Prophet (s) said:

Whomsoever visits al-Ḥasan in Baqī', their feet will remain firm on the bridge on the day the feet of people will slip.⁶

Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) said:

Whomsoever visits me, their sins will be forgiven, and they will not die poor.⁷

Al-Bukhtārī narrates from Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), from his father (a):

Al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī (a) used to visit the grave of al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī (a) every Friday morning.⁸

From the above narrations and more, one obtains much reward, both in this world as well as the hereafter, by visiting this blessed cemetery as well as the shrines of the Ahl al-Bayt.

THE IMPORTANCE PLACED BY MUSLIMS ON THE VISITATION OF BAQĪ'

Obtaining their inspiration and guidance from the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (s) himself, millions of Muslims have made the journey and visited the Cemetery of Baqī' throughout history. Additionally, many scholars have issued fatwas concerning the recommendation of the visitation of Baqī', and paying respects to the Imams as well as other noble individuals buried in this cemetery. These include Sunni jurists such as

4 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 97, p. 139.

5 *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 10, p. 350.

6 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 17, p. 141.

7 *Taḥrīr al-Aḥkām*, vol. 2, p. 123.

8 *Jawāhir al-Kalām*, vol. 20, p. 88.

the Mālikī scholar ‘Abd al-Karīm ibn Aṭā Allah,⁹ al-Sharbīnī, al-Bahūtī, al-Nawawī, and al-Ghazālī.¹⁰

Amongst the Shias, jurists such as al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī, Sabzawārī, al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī, al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī, al-Narāqī, and ‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī, as well as hundreds of other scholars, have highly recommended visiting this blessed cemetery. For example, Sheikh Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Jawāhirī, famously known as the author of *Jawāhir*, states: ‘It is unanimously agreed that the visitation of the pure Imams in Baqī’ is recommended, since it is an important part of the sect or religion, in addition to the authentic sources (that point to this).’¹¹

9 *Al-Ghadīr*, vol. 5, p. 110.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 159.

11 *Jawāhir al-Kalām*, vol. 20, p. 87.





CHAPTER FOUR

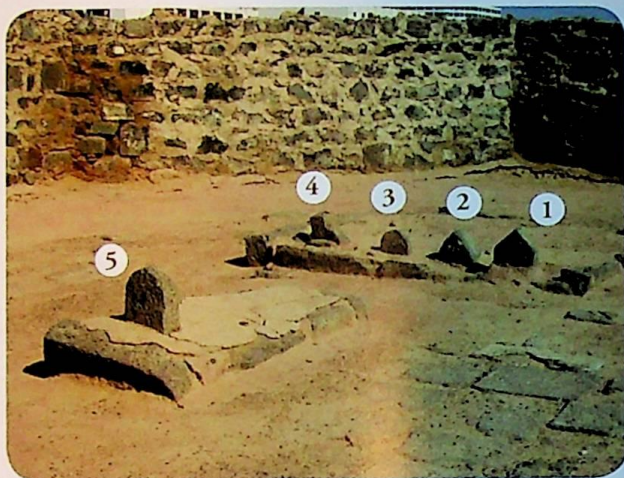
WHO IS BURIED IN BAQĪ' ?

The most important part of the Baqī' Cemetery throughout history is the area that has the graves of the four Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt as well as a few other prominent individuals.

IMAM AL-ḤASAN IBN 'ALĪ IBN ABĪ ṬĀLIB (A)

- The second Holy Imam of the Ahl al-Bayt.
- His father is Imam 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and his mother is Fāṭimah, the daughter of the Prophet (s).
- Born on 15 Ramadan 3 AH, and was named by the Prophet Muḥammad (s) under direction of Allah (swt).
- Was known as al-Mujtabā (the selected one), al-Zakī (the pure), and al-Ḥujjah (the proof).
- Referred to in the Holy Qur'an (3:61) as one of the sons of the Prophet (s).
- Part of the family praised in the Holy Qur'an (76:8) in many places, including the story of giving all their food for three consecutive days to a pauper, an orphan, and a captive.
- Praised by Prophet Muḥammad (s) as one of the masters of the youth of Paradise.
- Beloved to the Prophet (s), who used to say that he and Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) were the delight of his eyes.
- After the martyrdom of his father, Imam al-Ḥasan (a) took on the position of the caliph of the Muslims for 6 months (year 40 AH).
- Forced to sign a peace treaty with Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān after the Imam's army had been enticed and bribed by Mu'āwiyah. Treaty conditions were later

- 1 Imam al-Hasan (a)
- 2 Imam 'Alī al-Sajjād (a)
- 3 Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (a)
- 4 Imam Ja'far al-Šādiq (a)
- 5 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib



violated by Mu'āwiyah, who tore apart the agreement.

- Imam al-Ḥasan (a) was martyred on 7 Safar 50 AH, at the age of 47, through poison placed in his food by his wife Ju'dah bint al-Asha'ath, under the direction of Mu'āwiyah ibn Abū Sufyān.
- He was buried close to the grave of his grandmother, Faṭimah bint Asad (a) in Baqī'.

IMAM 'ALĪ IBN AL-ḤUSAYN AL-SAJJĀD (A)

- Fourth Holy Imam of the Ahl al-Bayt.
- His father is Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) and his mother is Shāh Zanān.
- Known by titles such as al-Sajjād, Zayn al-'Ābidīn and al-Zahid.
- Born on 5 Sha'bān 38 AH in Medina.
- Poisoned by Umayyad ruler Walid ibn 'Abd al-Mālik ibn Marwān, and was martyred on 25 Muḥarram 95 AH. He was 57 years old.
- Witnessed the tragedy of Karbala but was unable to fight due to ill health.
- Taken as captive with the women of the Ahl al-Bayt and paraded across Kufa (Iraq) and Syria.
- Legacy includes supplications such as those collected in Saḥīfah Sajjādiyyah, which includes more than fifty duas to awaken the masses and enhance spirituality.
- Imam al-Sajjād's Treatise of Rights is today regarded as one of the most

important documents in Islamic history, detailing the rights each human should observe, such as the rights of God, the neighbour, and one's own body.

IMAM MUḤAMMAD IBN 'ALĪ AL-BĀQIR (A)

- Fifth Holy Imam of the Ahl al-Bayt.
- His father is Imam 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (a), and his mother is Fāṭimah, the daughter of Imam al-Ḥasan (a).
- Known as al-Bāqir (the one who splits knowledge). This title was given to him by Prophet Muḥammad (s), who asked his companion Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh Anṣārī to greet Imam al-Bāqir on his behalf.
- Born 1 Rajab 57 AH in Medina.
- Martyred 7 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 114 AH, at the age of 57. Was poisoned by Ibrāhīm ibn al-Walīd.
- Present in Karbala at the age of 3 years. Later began to establish a major centre for education and the propagation of Islam.
- Instrumental in spreading the teachings of Islam very effectively, engaging in debates and discourses with people of other faiths and denominations.
- Had a number of distinguished companions who became well-known scholars, disseminating the teachings of Islam as taught by the Ahl al-Bayt.

IMAM JA'FAR IBN MUḤAMMAD AL-ṢĀDIQ (A)

- Sixth Holy Imam of the Ahl al-Bayt.
- His father is Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (a), and his mother is Umm Farwah.
- Born 17 Rabī' Awwal 83 AH.
- Martyred 25 Shawwāl 148 AH.
- Taught more than 4,000 students in a variety of disciplines.
- Together with his father Imam al-Bāqir (a), he enhanced many scholarly disciplines, such as astronomy, physics, medicine, as well as jurisprudence.
- Very influential in engaging with people of faith and no faith, providing intellectual arguments and rational reasoning on areas such as monotheism as well as the belief in divine leadership (*imāmah*).
- Known as the teacher of two of the main founders of Sunni jurisprudential schools: Abū Ḥanīfah (Nu'mān ibn Thābit) and Mālik ibn Anas.
- Utilised the period of in-fighting between Umayyids and Abbasids to spread teachings of Islam and educate the masses.

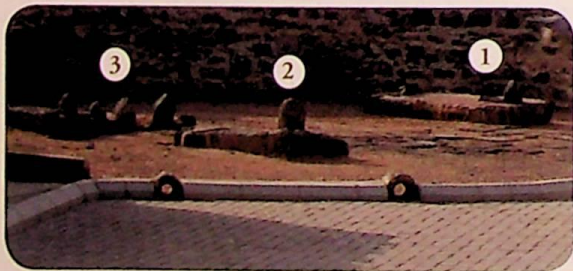
- Narrations from Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) are greater in number than any other Imam of the Ahl al-Bayt, due to the relatively peaceful period and freedom that he experienced in propagating the teachings of Islam.
- The Abbasid caliph al-Manṣūr began to place restrictions on the Imam (a), until he poisoned him in year 148 AH. This was part of the systematic oppression of the Shia of Ahl al-Bayt.

‘ABBĀS IBN ‘ABD AL-MUṬṬALIB

- The uncle of the Prophet (s) and Imam ‘Alī (a).
- Born fifty-six years before the migration (*hijrah*).
- On the opposing side to Muslims during the Battle of Badr. After being captured, he purchased his freedom and returned to Makkah. Later he accompanied the Prophet (s) in the conquest of Makkah (8 AH).
- He did not stand with Imam ‘Alī (a) nor support Lady Fāṭimah (a) in her legitimate demand for the return of Fadak. Some scholars are indifferent about him.
- He passed away on 14 Rajab 32 AH at the age of 88, and was buried in the cemetery of Banī Hāshim in Baqī’.

LADY FĀṬIMAH BINT ASAD (A)

- Died 4 or 5 AH.
- Devout wife of Abū Ṭālib (ra) and mother of Imam ‘Alī (a). Gave birth to Imam ‘Alī inside the Ka’bah, where its walls cracked open by permission of God only for Fāṭimah to enter.
- Looked after and protected Prophet Muḥammad (s). The Prophet (s) referred to her as ‘my mother’.
- First Hashemite to marry another Hashemite (Abū Ṭālib).



- 1 Lady Fāṭimah bint Asad (a)
- 2 ‘Abbās ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib
- 3 The four Imams:
Imam al-Hasan (a)
Imam ‘Alī al-Sajjād (a)
Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (a)
Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (a)

- Worshipper of Allah (swt) who never bowed down to an idol.
- Travelled from Mekkah to Medina with Imam 'Alī (a), Lady Fāṭimah (a), and Fāṭimah bint Zubayr (or possibly daughter of Ḥamzah ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib).
- Was praised by Allah (swt) for continuous remembrance of the Almighty throughout the journey (see Qur'an 3:191).
- The Prophet (s) prayed over her body, covered her with his cloak, and laid down in her grave before she was buried. This was to protect her from the squeezing of the grave.

THE DAUGHTERS OF THE PROPHET (S)

The three adopted daughters of the Prophet Muḥammad (s) are buried here. They are Zaynab, Ruqayyah, and Umm Kulthūm. They were the daughters of Hālah, Lady Khadijah's sister, and were adopted by Lady Khadijah following the demise of her sister. It is very unlikely, according to many Shia scholars, that these women were the actual daughters of the Prophet (s).

Due to the irrefutable importance of Baqī', narrations suggest that, during the life of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (s), all members of his family who passed away were buried in this cemetery. For example, Ibn Shabbah narrates:

When Ruqayyah, the daughter of the Prophet (s) passed away, the Prophet said:



Daughters of the Prophet (s): Zaynab, Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthūm

"Join her with (the grave of) the righteous 'Uthmān ibn Maz'ūn".¹

The graves of the three ladies, who were buried adjacent to each other, also had a dome that was later destroyed. This dome was witnessed by the likes of Ibrāhīm Pāshā.² The following is a brief account of the lives of these three ladies.

1. ZAYNAB

Being the oldest of the three, she was born ten years before the first revelation, when the Prophet (s) was 30 years of age. She later married Abī al-'Āṣ ibn Rabī', who was a wealthy businessman amongst the people of Mekkah. After the announcement by the Prophet of his mission, Zaynab embraced Islam, but her husband refused to do so. However, he remained loyal to her, refusing suggestions of divorce. Following the Battle of Badr, Zaynab's husband was amongst the captives taken by the Muslims. Zaynab, who was still in Mekkah, sent jewellery to the Muslims to request the release of her husband. It is suggested that this jewellery belonged to Khadījah (a).

The Prophet (s) agreed to release him, on the proviso that he grant Zaynab permission to come to Medina. Upon reaching Mekkah, Abī al-'Āṣ fulfilled his promise. On her way to Medina, 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ and those with him attacked Zaynab, causing her bleeding and the unfortunate miscarriage of her unborn child. To add to their suffering, the couple then endured six years of separation as a Muslim female cannot be married to a non-Muslim. Eventually, Abī al-'Āṣ ibn Rabī' embraced Islam and was reunited with his wife after the conquest of Mekkah. She tragically died a few months later. Zaynab had a daughter by the name of Imāmah. Lady Fātimah (a) requested Imam 'Alī (a) to marry Imāmah following her death. After the martyrdom of Lady Fātimah (a), Imam 'Alī (a) fulfilled her wish and married Imāmah.

2. RUQAYYAH

As the second oldest daughter after Zaynab, Ruqayyah married one of the sons of Abū Lahab known as 'Utbah. After the revelation of Sūrat al-Masad (chapter 111) condemning Abū Lahab, her husband subsequently divorced her. 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān married her thereafter, and they migrated to Abyssinia with the rest of the Muslims.

1 *Tārīkh al-Madīnah*, vol. 1, p. 102.

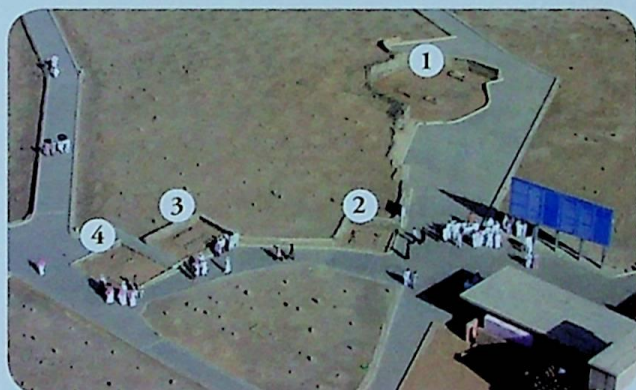
2 The viceroy of Egypt and Sudan who died in 1848 and travelled widely during his life.

Ruqayyah later travelled to Medina, and passed away in the city nearly two years after the migration of the Prophet (s).

3. UMM KULTHŪM

Having also married a son of Abū Lahab, Umm Kulthūm was divorced and later married 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, after her sister Ruqayyah passed away. She left this world in 9 AH. The Prophet (s) took part in her funeral and prayed over her body.

THE WIVES OF THE PROPHET (S)



- ① The four Imams + 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib + Fāṭimah bint Asad
- ② Daughters of the Prophet (s)
- ③ Wives of the Prophet (s)
- ④ 'Aqil ibn Abū Ṭālib + 'Abdullāh ibn Ja'far

Except for Lady Khadijah (a)³ and Maymūnah,⁴ the rest of the wives of the Prophet (s) are said to be buried in Baqī'. They are as follows.

1. SAWDAH BINT ZUM'AH

- One of the migrants to the land of Abyssinia with her husband al-Sakrān ibn 'Amr. After he died, she had to look after their six children and her aging father.
- Sawdah was a widow who married the Prophet (s) in Medina, and was known for her willingness to give charity.
- She passed away in the year 54 AH.

3 Buried in al-Mu'allā Cemetery in Makkah.

4 Buried in Sarf, a place approximately 19 miles away from Makkah, where she died.

2. 'Ā'ISHAH BINT ABŪ BAKR

- The daughter of 'Abdullāh ibn Abī Quḥāfah (known as Abū Bakr).
- The exact point of time of her marriage to the Prophet (s) is unknown (possibly 1, 2 or 4 AH).
- She led the Battle of Jamal (Camel) against Imam 'Alī (a), resulting in thousands of Muslims being killed.
- She died 17 Ramadan 58 AH during the caliphate of Mu'āwiyah.

3. ḤAFṢAH BINT 'UMAR

- Born five years before the start of revelation.
- A widow who was married by the Prophet (s) after he returned from the Battle of Badr.
- She passed away in 45 AH during the caliphate of Mu'āwiyah.

4. ZAYNAB BINT KHUZAYMAH

- Known as the 'mother of the poor,' since she spent a lot of time looking after the needy.
- A widow who married the Prophet (s) thirty-one months after the *hijrah*.
- She remained with the Prophet (s) for eight months, and passed away thirty-nine months after the *hijrah* at the age of 30.



Wives of the Prophet (s)

- The Prophet (s) prayed over her body and buried her in Baqī'.

5. UMM SALAMAH

- Her name is Hind bint Abī Umayyah.
- A widow whose husband, Abū Salamah, died in 4 AH.
- She passed away in 61 AH at the age of 84.
- An important narrator of *ḥadīth* – over 300 narrations from her are recorded.
- Was beloved to the Ahl al-Bayt.
- She is widely considered to be the second greatest wife of the Prophet (s) (the first being Lady Khadijah).

6. JUWAYRIYYAH BINT AL-ḤĀRITH

- From the Jewish Banī Mustalaq tribe of Medina, Juwayriyyah embraced the religion of Islam and married the Holy Prophet (s) in 6 AH.
- This was after the expedition of the Mustalaq tribe.
- She married the Prophet (s) after he freed her from slavery.
- Her father, al-Ḥārith, also embraced Islam at that time.
- She passed away in 56 AH.

7. ṢAFIYYAH BINT HAYYĪ

- From the descendants of Hārūn, the brother of Prophet Mūsā (a). She was a maid to Kunānah ibn Abī Ḥaqqīq, who was killed during the Battle of Khaybar 7 AH.
- She embraced Islam, the Prophet (s) freed her and then married her.
- She passed away in 50 AH.

8. UMM ḤABĪBAH BINT ABŪ SUFYĀN

- Her name was Ramlah bint Abū Sufyān. She was the daughter of the arch enemy

of Prophet Muḥammad (s).

- Her husband 'Ubaydullāh apostatised and converted to Christianity whilst they were in Abyssinia. The Prophet married her whilst she was there by sending a representative to conduct the marriage on his behalf. She arrived in Medina 7 AH at the age of 36.
- She rejected her father Abū Sufyān, refusing to welcome him when he came to Medina in year 8 AH.
- She passed away in 44 AH.

9. MARY THE COPT

- Gifted to the Prophet Muḥammad (s) by an Egyptian king, she was freed, and married by the Prophet (s) after the Ḥudaybiyyah treaty in 6 AH.
- She was loved by the Prophet (s), and gave birth to their son by the name of Ibrāhīm, who passed away in his infancy.
- Mary passed away in 16 AH, five years after the Prophet (s) had left this world.

10. ZAYNAB BINT JAHSH

- The first of the wives of the Prophet (s) to die after him. She passed away in 20 AH. She was 53 years of age.
- The story of her marriage and divorce to the Prophet's adopted son, Zayd ibn Ḥārithah, is mentioned in the Qur'an (33:37).

The graves of the Prophet's wives have been included amongst the few which had domes. According to historians, it was also considered a distinct shrine area. Al-Samhūdī (d.911 AH) writes: 'In the year 853 AH, the Amīr, Bardibak al-Mu'mar built a dome over their graves.'⁵ The Iranian explorer Farhād Mīrzā (d.1305 AH), who visited the site and witnessed the dome, adds: '(...) then I went to visit the wives of the Prophet (s). There were eight in one *darīh*, and each of their names were written on top of the grave using wood.'⁶

⁵ *Wafā al-Wafā*, vol. 3, p. 917.

⁶ *Rihlat Farhād Mīrzā*, as cited in *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'immaḥ Baqī*, p. 221.

One of the oldest historians of Medina, Ibn Shabbah, questions whether Umm Salamah was buried with the other wives of the Prophet (s). Instead, he suggests she is buried close to Bayt al-Aḥzān.⁷ This was the place that Imam 'Alī had designated for his wife Lady Fāṭimah to mourn the loss of her father, as well as the other injustices faced by the Ahl al-Bayt.

'AQĪL IBN ABŪ ṬĀLIB

'Aqīl was the cousin of the Prophet (s) and brother of Imam 'Alī (a), as well as the uncle of Imam al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (a). His mother was Fāṭimah bint Asad (a). He was born thirty-three years before the migration of the Prophet (s), and died in 50 AH. The Prophet (s) loved 'Aqīl and told Imam 'Alī (a) that 'Aqīl's son will be killed whilst defending Imam al-Ḥusayn (a). He fought with the Prophet (s) and defended him during the Battle of Ḥunayn. Another interesting fact regarding 'Aqīl was his renowned expertise in the field of genealogy – he recommended Lady Umm al-Banīn to Imam 'Alī (a) for marriage, as the Commander of the Faithful wanted a wife who would produce strong, capable sons, particularly to fight alongside Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) on the Day of Ashura.



1 'Aqīl ibn Abū Ṭālib

2 'Abdullāh ibn Ja'far

7 *Tārīkh al-Madīnah*, vol. 1, p. 120.

Banī Umayyah sought to distort his image and hence instigated lies about his life. History records that he defended Imam 'Alī (a) on numerous occasions, especially whilst confronting Mu'āwiyah. Six of 'Aqīl's sons were martyred in defence of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) in Karbala, whilst six more martyrs were his grandchildren. They include the eight and ten year old sons of Muslim ibn 'Aqīl, who were brutally executed by the orders of Yazīd's governor in Kufa, 'Ubaydullāh ibn Ziyād.

The grave of 'Aqīl used to have a dome and was distinguishable in the Cemetery of Baqī'. This is authenticated by the likes of Ibn al-Najjār (d.642 AH),⁸ and Ismā'il al-Marandī (d.1255 AH), who wrote: "The dome of 'Aqīl ibn Abī Ṭālib, the brother of the Commander of the Faithful (a), covers the grave with 'Abdullāh ibn Ja'far, in the same place."⁹

‘ABDULLĀH IBN JA‘FAR

'Abdullāh was the nephew of Imam 'Alī (a) and the husband of Lady Zaynab (a). His father was Ja'far ibn Abū Ṭālib (a), who was martyred in the battle of Mu'tah in 8 AH and his mother was Asmā bint Umays (ra).

He was born in Abyssinia as the first Muslim born in Africa due to the migration of Muslims from Mekkah. He fought on the side of Imam 'Alī (a) in Siffīn and was distinguished by his nobility and generosity. He was not present in Karbala with Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) and his wife, Lady Zaynab, due to illness or other such valid reasons, but two of his sons were martyred on the 10th of Muḥarram. He left this world in 90 AH (or earlier according to some narrations).

8 *Al-Durra al-Thameena fi Akhbār al-Madīnah*, p. 154 as cited in *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'imma Baqī'*, p. 242.

9 *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'imma Baqī'*, p. 242.



CHAPTER FIVE

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

THE HISTORY OF THE GRAVES OF THE FOUR IMAMS OF THE AHL AL-BAYT

Prior to 1925, a big dome covered the area within Baqī' that houses the blessed graves of the Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt, together with the graves of Fāṭimah bint Asad and 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. Each had a beautiful *ḍarīh*, or box, covering the grave, except that of Fāṭimah. How did this come about, and what development did these shrines go through in history? This is important to discuss in detail since the shrines have now been destroyed, whilst historical records and images refer to their protection and enhancement by Muslims for hundreds of years preceding this destruction.

BAQĪ' CONNECTED TO HOUSES IN MEDINA

Historical accounts point out that, after the migration of the Prophet (s) to Medina, many houses were physically connected to Baqī', linked through small alleyways. Baqī' was much smaller than what it is today, and existed behind many houses. The location of the Prophet's Mosque today is considered as the central point of the city. As time progressed and more people wanted to be buried in Baqī', some of the houses turned into places of burial, whilst other houses were destroyed to link more graves to the cemetery.¹ For example, 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Azīz purchased a house that belonged to Zayd ibn 'Alī and his sister Khadījah for 1,500 dinars; he destroyed it and connected

1 *Akhbār al-Madīnah*, vol. 1, p. 152.

it to Baqī' so that it could become a resting place for the family of 'Umar ibn Khaṭṭāb.²

THE HOUSE OF 'AQĪL IBN ABŪ ṬĀLIB

After his migration, the Holy Prophet (s) sought to establish the community in Medina and provide necessary accommodation for Muslims. Historical accounts point to the Holy Prophet (s) distributing some land in Medina between Baqī' and the mosque to various people to build houses. Amongst them was his cousin 'Aqīl.

Importantly, many historians have commented on the significance of the house of 'Aqīl in Medina, since it was eventually turned into a place of rest for the Ahl al-Bayt within Baqī'. The first to be buried in the house of 'Aqīl was Fāṭimah bint Asad in 4 AH, followed by 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib (the Prophet's uncle). The four Imams were also later buried in this house (part of the Cemetery of Baqī'). This area later became known as 'Maqābir Banī Hāshim', or the 'Graves of Banī Hāshim'.³

Ibn Shabbah is probably the earliest historian to have written about Medina. He passed away in 262 AH. He states, "Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib⁴ was buried close to Fāṭimah bint Asad's grave, at the beginning of the area known as the 'Graves of Banī Hāshim'. This area is in the house of 'Aqīl'.⁵ Two other well-known historians of Medina; al-Samhūdī and Aḥmad al-'Abbāsī have stated the same.⁶

When Imam al-Ḥasan (a) was martyred in 50 AH, he requested to be buried next to his grandfather, the Holy Prophet (s). However, 'Ā'ishah objected, and according to the Imam's instructions coupled with his desire to avoid bloodshed he was instead buried next to his grandmother, Fāṭimah bint Asad (a), in Baqī'.⁷ The well-known historian al-Mas'ūdī (d.346 AH) writes: 'In the year 95 AH, 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn died and was buried in Baqī' next to his uncle al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī'.⁸ The author also confirms that Imam al-Bāqir and Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) are buried next to Imam al-Sajjād (a).⁹

2 Ibid., vol. 1, p. 156.

3 *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'immah Baqī'*, p. 56.

4 The uncle of the Prophet (s) who passed away in 32 AH.

5 *Tārīkh al-Madīnah*, vol. 1, p. 127.

6 *Wafā al-Wafā*, vol. 3, p. 910.

7 *Kitāb al-Irshād*, p. 192. *Tārīkh al-Madīnah*, vol. 1, p. 111.

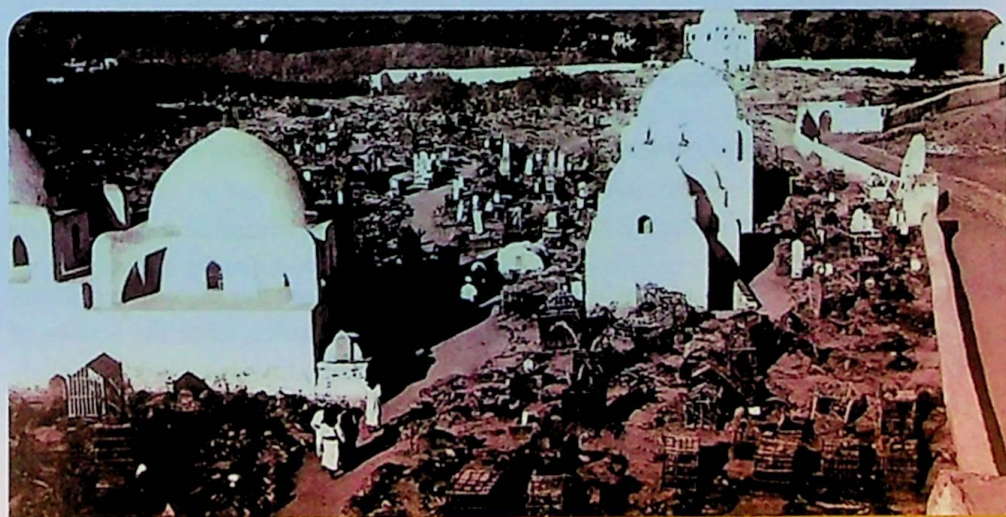
8 *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol. 3, p. 169.

9 Ibid., p. 232 and p. 297.

Sheikh Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī encouraged Muslims to visit the graves of the four Imams: 'It is recommended to visit the grave of al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī, and inside (the house) next to it, 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn, Muḥammad ibn 'Alī, and Ja'far ibn Muḥammad.'¹⁰ A proper examination of several historical records conveys that these holy personalities were buried in a construction with a roof and walls, which used to be the house of 'Aqīl. This is important, since those who destroyed their shrines argue against the validity of constructions above graves.¹¹

WHY WERE THEY BURIED INSIDE THE HOUSE?

The people of Medina used to have private cemeteries, where distinguished people used to be buried within them. The best example is the Holy Prophet (s), who was buried in his house. Other examples include 'Abdullāh, the father of the Prophet (s), who was buried in a house known as 'Bayt al-Nābighah.' Similarly, Raf' ibn Mālīk, a prominent companion who was martyred in the Battle of Uḥud, was buried in the house of 'Āl Nawfal.'¹²



Baqī' Cemetery during the Uthmani period

10 *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, vol. 1, p. 387.

11 In a visit to Baqī' a few years ago, one of the religious guards tried to argue that no such people are buried in this area, and no evidence to this belief exists. This is a plan to reduce or eradicate the remembrance of *Ahl al-Bayt* (a).

12 *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 2, p. 158. *Wafā al-Wafā*, vol. 3, p. 941.

AN IMPORTANT NARRATION

As al-Samhūdī, a well-known non-Shia historian of Medina, narrated from Ibn Zubalah, another historian, who narrates from Khalid ibn Awsajah, who said:

I was supplicating at the corner of the house of 'Aqīl ibn Abī Ṭālib when I saw Ja'far ibn Muḥammad (al-Ṣādiq). He then asked me: 'Are you standing here for a reason?'

I replied: 'No.'

He then said: 'This is the place where the Prophet of God (s) used to come at night to ask forgiveness for the people of Baqī'.¹³

The historian then comments that his teacher, Zayn al-Marāghī, used to encourage people to stand in this place and supplicate, since *du'ā* next to this house and graves is answered (by God). He further adds: 'A righteous believer once supplicated here (i.e., the house of 'Aqīl), and saw a piece of paper fall in front of him. On it he found the verse:

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ

"And your Lord said: supplicate to me and I will respond to you"

(Holy Qur'an, 40:60)

The important question to ask is why did the Prophet (s) choose this place to supplicate for those buried in Baqī? This could not have been a coincidence, since the actions of the Prophet (s) and his words are all revelation from the Almighty (swt). It is very likely that the Holy Prophet (s) wanted to show Muslims the importance of this place and how it would eventually house the bodies of his grandsons, who are the representatives of Allah (swt) on Earth after him. Undoubtedly, his place of *du'ā* serves to highlight the significance of the Imams as well as the belief that their place of burial is special, with its visitation having a reward and with supplications being granted by the Almighty (swt).

It is likely therefore, that the Prophet (s) would have explained the reason for the

13 *Wafā al-Wafā*, vol. 3, p. 890.



Part of the Baqī Cemetery during the Uthmani period

importance of this house had he been asked. At the same time, it seems that Muslims felt the significance of this house, since narrations indicate the strong desire of many Muslims to be buried near the house of 'Aqīl in Baqī'. One example is of the companion Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqās, who asked to be buried on the eastern side next to the house of 'Aqīl. When he died in 56 AH outside Medina, his body was transferred to, and buried in the location he had requested.¹⁴ Similarly, the cousin of Prophet Muḥammad (s), by the name of Abū Sufyān ibn al-Hārith ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, requested for his burial to be outside the house of 'Aqīl. When he died, his wish was respected.¹⁵

THE SECOND DEVELOPMENT PHASE OF SHRINES IN BAQĪ

This phase involves the development of the house in Baqī' (where the Imams were buried) into a place of visitation or shrine.¹⁶ Exact dates or information regarding

14 *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 2, p. 293. *Tārīkh al-Madīnah*, vol. 1, p. 116.

15 *Wafā al-Wafā*, vol. 3, p. 911. *Tārīkh al-Madīnah*, vol. 1, p. 127.

16 It is suggested that constructions over graves were referred to as 'shrine' or 'mausoleum' in the fifth and sixth century AH. Before this, constructions over graves were usually referred to as mosques. This is likely to be inspired from the story of the People of the Cave, for whom the Holy Qur'an (18:21) describes a mosque being erected over their graves.

this has proven difficult to source. However, the oldest documentation of Medina by the historian 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Zubalah, who was alive in 199 AH, suggests that the transformation into shrines occurred in the second century AH. This was during the caliphate of the Abbasid ruler Abī al-'Abbās al-Ṣaffah (132–136 AH) or during the caliphate of Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr (137–149 AH).¹⁷ The reason suggested is a combination of both religious and political motivations.

The Abbasids took over the caliphate in 132 AH and sought to elevate the status of 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the uncle of the Prophet (s). Emphasis on his personality through narrations was enhanced, and a shrine was erected to draw people to his resting place. Since he was buried next to the Imams, the Abbasids decided to include the three Imams under the shrine as well. These were Imam al-Ḥasan, Imam al-Sajjād, and Imam al-Bāqir (a).

Moreover, the Abbasids attempted to deceive the Muslims by showing that they were also seeking justice for the family of the Prophet (s) and were their main supporters. This is not the first time that politics had a role in grave construction or destruction. Historical records tell us that Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān commanded the construction of a river so that it could flow next to the graves of the martyrs of the Battle of Uḥud, especially that of Ḥamzah - the uncle of the Prophet (s), in order to eradicate their remembrance. He was keen to erase the memory of the heinous acts committed by his mother Hind on the corpse of Ḥamzah.¹⁸

At the same time, it is well documented that the Abbasids initially sought to attract the Shia of the Ahl al-Bayt towards them by falsely claiming to defend the rights of the Prophet's family. It is likely that the building of the shrines of the Imams in Baqī' was part of this plan. When Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (a) was martyred in 148 AH (he was poisoned by the Abbasid caliph al-Manṣūr), his blessed body was buried inside the newly constructed shrine besides the three Imams.¹⁹

Historical sources are sadly non-existent regarding the development of the shrines in

17 *Tārīkh al-Madīnah*, vol. 1, p. 127.

18 *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, vol. 3, p. 397–398. *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 2, p. 50. Hind tore open the body of Ḥamzah and attempted to chew his liver.

19 *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'imma Baqī'*, p. 83.



Baqī' until the fifth century. Various sources have pointed to the Seljuq king, known as Barkiyaruq ibn Malakshāh (d.498 AH), as the one instructing the building of the shrines. For about 800 years that followed, this construction caught the attention of the visitors as well as explorers who came to Medina. The king sent a Shia minister by the name of Abū al-Faṭḥ Asad ibn Muḥammad ibn Mūsā Majd al-Mālik to construct the shrine. Scholars, such as al-Muḥaddith al-Qummī, have suggested that this minister also built the shrines of Imam al-Kāzim and Imam al-Jawād (a) in Kaẓimiyyah, Iraq.²⁰

The exact date of the construction is unknown, yet it seems to have occurred between 486 and 498 AH (during the rule of King Barkiyaruq, the Sultan of the Great Seljuq empire). Testimonies from those alive near that time confirm this. For example, a scholar by the name of 'Abd al-Jalīl al-Qazwīnī wrote in 556 AH: 'The dome of al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī (a) is next to the place of the burial of 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, and it was built by the command of Majd al-Mālik.'²¹

EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS OF THE SHRINE

The well-known traveller from Spain by the name of Ibn Jubayr (d.1217) writes: 'The dome (of Baqī') is high up in the sky next to the entrance of the cemetery.'²²

Ibn Najjār (d.1245), a historian of his time, says: 'It is a big and tall construction with two doors, one is opened each day.'²³

Ibn Baṭṭūṭah (d.1377), another well-known traveller, states: 'The dome (of Baqī') is tall and great in construction.'²⁴

20 *Hadiyyat al-Aḥbāb*, p. 119.

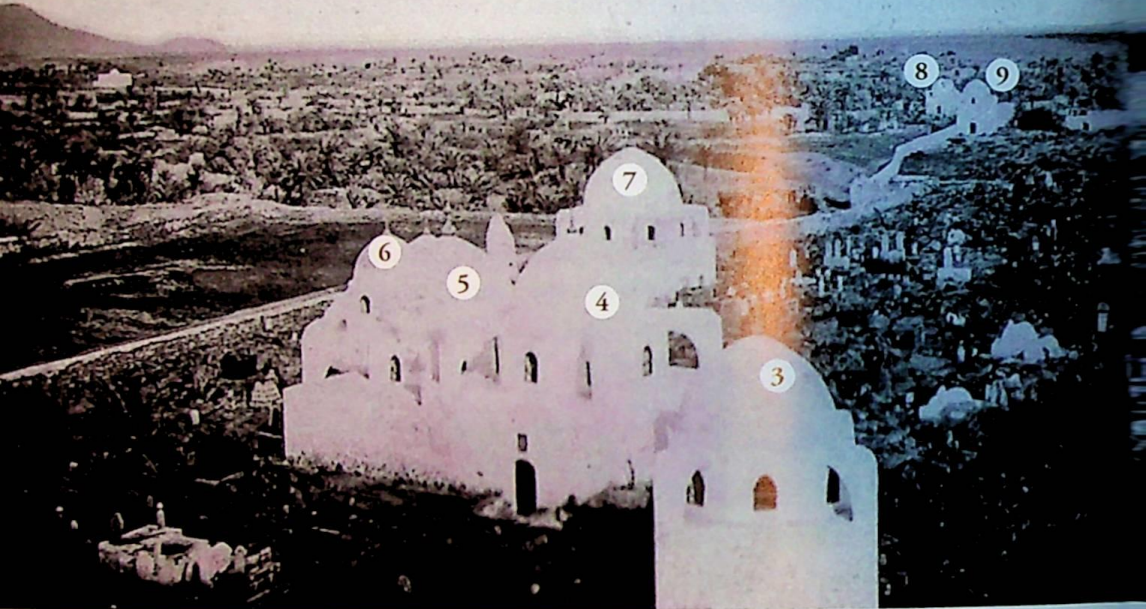
21 *Al-Naqd*, p. 58 as cited in *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'immah Baqī'*, p. 86.

22 *Rihlat Ibn Jubayr*, as cited in *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'immah Baqī'*, p. 87.

23 *Wafā al-Wafā*, vol. 3, p. 916.

24 *Rihlat Ibn Baṭṭūṭah*, as cited in *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'immah Baqī'*, p. 88.

* Central image: The shrine of the four Imams in Baqī' during the Uthmani time.



- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| ① Bayt al-Aḥzān (The House of Sorrows) | ⑥ Ibrāhīm, the son of the Prophet (s) |
| ② Four Imams + 'Abbās + Fāṭimah bint Asad | ⑦ Imam Mālik and Nāfi' |
| ③ Daughters of the Prophet (s) | ⑧ Ḥalimah Sa'diyyah |
| ④ Wives of the Prophet (s) | ⑨ 'Uthmān ibn Maẓ'ūn |
| ⑤ 'Aqil ibn Abū Ṭālib + 'Abdullāh ibn Ja'far | ⑩ Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī |

Sir Richard Burton (d.1890), who travelled to Medina in 1276 AH, describes the shrine in the following manner:

This dome is bigger and more beautiful than the other domes, and it is found on the right side of the entrance to the cemetery.²⁵

Ibrāhīm Raf'at Bāshā, who performed the hajj in 1325 AH (nineteen years before the

25 *Mawsū'āt al-Aṣṭabāt al-Muqadassah*, as cited in *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'immaḥ Baqī'*, p. 88.

* Image above: *The Baqī' Cemetery with the elevated shrines.*



final destruction) states: “Abbās and al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī as well as those mentioned are under one dome, which is the tallest there (...)”²⁶

THE RENOVATIONS OF BAQĪ' IN HISTORY

According to al-Samhūdī, the first renovation took place in 519 AH by the command of the Abbasid caliph, al-Mustarshid Billāh (d.529 AH).²⁷ Later, the Abbasid caliph al-Muntaṣir Billāh ordered more renovation work, between 623 and 640 AH. It is important to note, however, that historical accounts do not suggest these Abbasid caliphs constructed or built any of the domes or shrines themselves, since Majd al-Mālik had already done this very well. Rather, it is very likely that they renovated certain parts due to the increasing number of visits by Muslims.

26 *Mir'āt al-Ḥaramayn*, as cited in *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'immah Baqī'*, p. 89.

27 *Wafā al-Wafā*, vol. 3, p. 916.

The third recorded renovation was completed by Sultan Maḥmūd Khān al-'Uthmānī, an Ottoman ruler who died in 1255 AH. This is evident from the existence of poetry engraved on the entrance of Baqī' – dating the renovation as 1233 AH.²⁸

Despite relatively few sources detailing renovation work in Baqī', there is no doubt that the shrines of the Imams in Baqī' were the subject of respect and visitation by many Muslims, and that renovation work continued throughout the years. This is especially the case when we notice how kings and rulers paid attention to the shrines themselves, and invested in their construction and development.

THE FEATURES OF THE BAQĪ' SHRINE

Several interesting elements regarding the Baqī' mausoleum can be derived from the historians own accounts of their visits to Medina as well as those of others.

1. ITS GRANDEUR AND BEAUTY

In addition to those who commented on its size and the presentation of the dome, another traveller by the name of Mīrzā al-Farahānī (b.1264 AH) visited Baqī' in 1302 AH and wrote: 'Four of the twelve Imams (peace be upon them) are buried in this large section with eight pillars, with white walls and a white dome.'²⁹

2. THE DOORS OF THE BAQĪ' SANCTUARY

According to Ibn Najjār (d.647 AH), who was a historian of Medina, the cemetery had two gates, one of which would open daily.³⁰

3. THE MIHRĀB³¹ OF BAQĪ'

Al-Samhūdī comments on a *mihrāb* in Baqī': 'I saw at the top of the *mihrāb* of this shrine written: 'Completed by the orders of al-Manṣūr al-Muntaṣir Billāh.'³²

28 *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'immaḥ Baqī'*, p. 92.

29 *Rihlat al-Farahani*, as cited in *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'immaḥ Baqī'*, p. 94.

30 *Wafā al-Wafā*, vol. 3, p. 916.

31 A place where the leader of congregational prayers would stand to pray.

32 *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 916.



Baqī' Cemetery with the minarets of the Prophet's mosque in the background

4. THE SERVANTS OF THE SHRINE

Ibrāhīm Raf'at Bāshā, who was the head of the Egyptian hajj delegation, performed the pilgrimage in 1325 AH. He writes:

The people of Medina visit Baqī' every Thursday. They place bouquets of flowers and fragrance on the graves. No Shia enters the sacred *haram* of Ahl al-Bayt except after paying five Qarsh to the servants. This is the same for anyone who wants to enter the Ka'bah or the Prophetic house, where they need to pay one Rial. If they are wealthy they are expected to pay more.³³

5. WAS THERE A COURTYARD?

A common feature of the shrines of the Imams, whether in Iraq or Iran, is the presence of courtyards surrounding the actual mausoleum containing the holy body. As for Baqī', it seems that no such courtyard existed. This is because visitors, historians, and others have not mentioned anything regarding courtyards in that area. At the same time, some like Sayf al-Dawlah, who performed hajj in 1279 AH, mentioned that no courtyard existed in Baqī'.³⁴

33 *Mir'āt al-Haramayn*, vol. 1, p. 427 as cited in *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'imma Baqī'*, p. 97.

34 *Rihlat Sayf al-Dawlah*, p. 143, as cited in *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'imma Baqī'*, p. 98.

6. THE ḌARĪḤ (TOMB) IN BAQĪ'

Within the shrine erected at the house of 'Aqīl, two large *ḍarīḥs* (mausoleums) were built. One was for the four Imams and the other for the grave of 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. This is deduced from the observation of several explorers and historians. For example, Ibn Jubayr (d.614 AH) writes: "Their graves are raised from the ground, quite wide with planks joined in the best of ways. These are supported by wooden pieces, nicely held by beautiful nails."³⁵ Similar descriptions are found in the works of Ibn Baṭṭūṭah as well as al-Samhūdī.³⁶

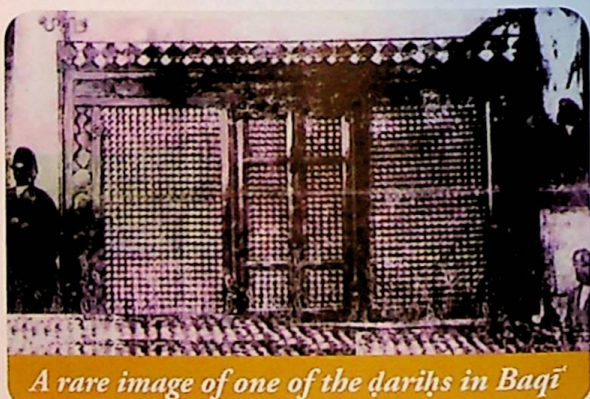
Despite the lack of clarity in historical records as to when these tombs were built and by whom, it is likely that the same individual who dedicated much effort to building the shrine did the same for the mausoleums inside as well. That person was Majd al-Mālik, the minister of the king of Baradistan. However, some later narrations suggest that the tombs were combined into one *ḍarīḥ* and covered with cloth. Ismā'il al-Marandī, who authored a book on Medina in 1255 AH, writes:

The five graves are part of one tomb, made from wood. Inside, the grave of 'Abbās is separated from the four Imams, whilst their graves are covered by cloth. Above the tomb a large dome is found.³⁷

THE LAST ḌARĪḤ

Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn, one of the established Shia scholars who died in 1371 AH, was amongst the few who had seen and documented the *ḍarīḥ* of the Imams of Baqī' before it was finally destroyed. He writes:

A beautiful mausoleum was constructed for the Imams' shrine, decorated with the exalted names of Allah (swt) in



A rare image of one of the ḍarīḥs in Baqī'

35 *Rihlat Ibn Jubayr*, p. 174, as cited in *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'imma Baqī'*, p. 99.

36 *Wafā al-Wafā*, vol. 3, p. 916.

37 *Tawṣīf al-Madīnah*, as cited in *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'imma Baqī'*, p. 102.

beautiful calligraphy and plated in gold. Permission was granted from the Ottoman authorities, and the government of Iran transferred this *ḍarīḥ* to Jeddah. However, the established heads in Medina prohibited its transportation into the city. It therefore remained in Jeddah for three years. Consequently, the Iranians were forced to pay much money in return for permission to install this in Baqī'. Despite this, opposition remained. Eventually permission was granted to replace the old *ḍarīḥ* with the new one. However, since the new *ḍarīḥ* was not big enough to encompass the area, they extended it by adding wooden pieces of matching colour. I performed the hajj in 1321 and saw this *ḍarīḥ* whilst visiting Medina. In 1330, I visited Medina directly from Damascus and saw it in the same state. The *ḍarīḥ* stayed this way until it was destroyed by the Wahhabis along with the dome and the ḥaram.³⁸

THE ḌARĪḤ OF FĀṬIMAH BINT ASAD

There is much confusion between historians and scholars about the exact identity of the grave next to the Imams (as to whether it belongs to Fāṭimah al-Zahrā (a) or Fāṭimah bint Asad). From the sources that are available, it can be inferred that the grave of Fāṭimah bint Asad was present inside the shrine of the Imams (a), and was raised slightly from the ground. It did not have a *ḍarīḥ* like that of the Imams or 'Abbās, but was rather covered with valuable fabric, especially during the days of hajj.

BAYT AL-AḤZĀN (THE HOUSE OF SORROWS)

Following the tragic events that befell the Holy Household, such as the sad demise of Prophet Muḥammad (s) and the attack on Lady Fāṭimah's (a) house, the Prophet's daughter suffered great grief and sorrow. She would cry continuously, as an expression of protest over the injustices and oppression she endured. Some people complained to Imam 'Alī (a), asking for the crying to stop. He therefore placed a tent, close to the house of 'Aqīl in Baqī', during Lady Fāṭimah's lifetime. This was later constructed into a house and eventually became known as Bayt al-Aḥzān (The House of Sorrows). Inside, Lady Fāṭimah (a) used to mourn the state of the *ummah* and the oppression the Ahl al-Bayt faced by the ruling authorities.

During the Ottoman period, a small mausoleum was constructed in that same

38 *Kashf al-Irtiyāb*, p. 324.

place. Visitors would come and pay their respects, remembering the daughter of the Prophet (s). People often referred to this place as the 'Mosque of Fāṭimah' or 'The Dome of Sadness'. During the destruction of the Baqī' Cemetery, this building was also demolished.

Many Shia and Sunni historians have commented on Bayt al-Aḥzān and its existence. This includes the likes of Ibn Jubayr and al-Samhūdī.³⁹ Sir Richard Burton, a British explorer who died in 1890, and who visited Medina, writes: 'Inside Baqī', a small mosque is found to the south of the dome of 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. This is referred to as Bayt al-Aḥzān, since Fāṭimah al-Zahrā spent the last days of her life in this place weeping for her beloved father.'⁴⁰

The Chief of the Egyptian hajj delegation, Ibrāhīm Raf' at Bāshā, visited Baqī' in 1325 AH and recorded the existence of this building. Similarly, the well-known Shia scholar and author, Sayyid 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn, visited Baqī' in 1299 and witnessed it. The leading Shia scholar in Medina, Sheikh Muḥammad 'Alī Amri, who passed

39 *Wafā al-Wafā*, vol. 3, p. 918.

40 *Mawsū'āt al-Aṭabāt al-Muqadassah*, vol. 3, p. 285.



away in 2011 at the age of 120, said: 'When I was 8 or 9, I used to visit Bayt al-Aḥzān with my mother regularly. The construction had a dome, and the inside was furnished with carpet. It measured between eight and nine metres, located in the south-western side of the shrines of the Imams in Baqī'.⁴¹

IBRĀHĪM, THE SON OF THE PROPHET (S)

Born in Dhū al-Ḥijjah, in 8 AH in Medina, Ibrāhīm was very much loved by the Prophet Muḥammad (s). It is narrated that, after choosing the name Ibrāhīm for his

41 *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'imma Baqī'*, p. 174.



son, Jibril descended and greeted the Prophet (s) by saying, 'Peace be upon you, O father of Ibrāhīm'.⁴² His mother was Mary the Copt. He died in his infancy on 18 Rajab 10 AH (11 Rabī' Awwal 10 AH has also been mentioned) and Imam 'Alī (a) carried out the death rituals and buried him in Baqī'. The Prophet (s) himself took charge of the washing and prayers. After he was laid to rest, the Prophet (s) placed a rock on the grave so that it could be identified and then sprayed the grave with water.⁴³

Historical accounts portray how Muslims looked after the grave throughout the years. Although the exact date of construction is unknown, historians such as Ibn Jubayr (d.614 AH) have recorded that the grave was built as a construction and had a white dome.⁴⁴ Others such as Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, Ibn Najjār, al-Samhūdī, and al-Marandī have also documented the existence of a mausoleum as well as a dome for Ibrāhīm.⁴⁵ Al-Matari, another historian (d. 741 AH), says: 'On top of his grave is a dome. Inside there is a box on the direction of the qibla, and he is buried next to 'Uthmān ibn Maẓ'ūn'.⁴⁶

It is suggested that the grave of his mother, Mary the Copt, as well as companions such as 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Awf and Asad ibn Zurārah are in proximity to the grave of Ibrāhīm.

42 *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd*, vol. 1, p. 87.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 92.

44 *Rihlat Ibn Jubayr* as cited in *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'immah Baqī'*, p. 179.

45 *Wafā al-Wafā*, vol. 3, p. 918; *Akhbār al-Madīnah*, p. 155.

46 *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'immah Baqī'*, p. 179.

* Image below: The grave of Ibrāhīm, the son of the Prophet (s).



ISMĀ'ĪL IBN JA'FAR AL-ŞĀDIQ (A)

Ismā'īl was the oldest son of Imam Ja'far al-Şādiq (a) and the brother of Imam Mūsā al-Kāẓim (a). He was born between the years 100 and 103 AH. His mother was Fāṭimah bint al-Ḥusayn al-Athram, the daughter of Imam al-Ḥasan (a). He was loved by Imam al-Şādiq (a), but tragically died during the lifetime of the sixth Imam in 145 AH.

According to Sheikh al-Mufid, Ismā'īl died in an area known as Urayd, which lies between Medina and the mountain of Uḥud. Imam al-Şādiq (a) used to own several palm trees and fields in that area. The body of Ismā'īl was transferred and buried in Baqī'. Before his burial, Imam al-Şādiq (a) was greatly saddened, and ordered for his coffin to be placed on the ground several times before the burial. He deliberately uncovered the face of Ismā'īl in the coffin so that people realised who he was.⁴⁷ This is due to the fact the Imam knew some would claim later that Ismā'īl had not died but was in occultation.

Al-Nu'mānī narrates:

Zurārah ibn A'yūn said: I visited Abū 'Abdillāh (al-Şādiq) (a), and his son Mūsā (a) was next to him, along with a covered body (...) there were thirty in the house. The Imam (a) then said: 'O Dāwūd, remove the covering from the face of Ismā'īl.' He did so. Imam then asked: 'O Dāwūd, is he dead or alive?'

Dāwūd responded: 'My master, he is dead.'

The Imam began asking this question to each person in the house, and when they all testified about Ismā'īl's death, Imam said: 'O Allah (swt) bear witness.' Thereafter he commanded that Ismā'īl's body is washed and shrouded. Upon completion, he asked al-Mufaḍḍal: 'Remove the cover from his face.' When that was done, the Imam said: 'Is he alive or dead?'

Mufaḍḍal said: 'Dead.'

The Imam (a) then prayed: 'O Allah (swt) bear witness.' The Imam then repeated the same thing during the funeral and burial, and finally held the hands of Mūsā (a) and said: 'He is the truth, and the truth is from him, until Allah (swt) inherits the Earth and whosoever is in it.'⁴⁸

47 *Kitāb al-Irshād*, p. 285.

48 *Kitāb al-Ghaybah*, p. 327.

Initially, the location of Ismā'il's grave was outside Baqī'. Historians, however, have noted the grand size of his mausoleum throughout the years. This is because of the emphasis placed by the Fatimid rulers in Egypt, who were Ismaili.⁴⁹ Since the Fatimids ruled from 297 to 568 AH, the shrine of Ismā'il in Baqī' is considered as one of the oldest to have been built and maintained.

Al-Sambūdi, for example, describes the shrine as 'quite big, with three entrance doors'.⁵⁰ He adds that, to the northern side of the sanctuary of Ismā'il, was a house that belonged to Imam al-Sajjād (a) and, to the western direction, a mosque known as 'Masjid Imam Zayn al-'Ābidīn'.⁵¹ According to al-Sambūdi, this particular mosque was the one in which Imam al-Bāqir (a) fell down a well which was located inside. This incident occurred during the prayers of Imam al-Sajjād (a). He did not, however, stop his prayers to attend to his son. Later, this mosque and house were both added to Ismā'il's sanctuary. The shrine was then outside Baqī' and surrounded by other houses.

In 1925, after the second destruction of Baqī', the adjacent shrines were also destroyed. However, for a few years, short walls surrounding the graves outside Baqī' remained intact and were left. These walls did not have doors or windows, but were left to mark the existence of a grave in that compound.⁵² Sheikh Muḥammad Ṣādiq al-Najmi, an author and historian, visited Medina in 1974 and wrote:

The grave of Ismā'il was outside Baqī' and towards the western side of the cemetery. It was about 15 metres away from the graves of the four Imams (a). The grave was encapsulated by a wall, which was three metres in height by three metres in width. Half of the wall was on the main road and half was on the pavement. Visitors used to stand next to it to recite *ziyārah*, since it was not possible to see what was inside. If the area became congested, the police would disperse the crowd. Upon my return to Iran after the hajj, important news amongst the people as well as *ahle-bayt* in the *hawzah* began to circulate. This was that the Saudi government began to rebuild the road on the western side of Baqī', and they discovered the body of Ismā'il the son of Imam al-Ṣādiq (a). The body was completely intact, and was recovered inside Baqī'. I subsequently checked the authenticity of such a report with Ayatollah Sheikh Muḥammad Rashtī, whom I trust as a reliable

⁴⁹ *Wafā' al-Wafā'*, vol. 3, p. 920.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 920.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 920.

⁵² *Farah Fāran fi Imām Baqī'*, p. 289.

scholar. He confirmed and reassured me of this occurrence. In the following year when I had the honour of returning for hajj, I did not find the walled section I saw the year earlier. This confirmed that the body of Ismā'il had indeed been transferred inside.⁵³

The exact location of the grave of Ismā'il is said to be on the western side of the martyrs' graves – about 10 metres away from the grave of Ḥalimah Sa'diyyah. Evidently, the body of Ismā'il must have been intact when it was discovered. Otherwise the body would not have been transferred by the authorities, since they would have erased the location on the road outside (as they have destroyed many historical sites in both Mekkah and Medina) without the need to bring a body inside.

ḤALĪMAH SA' DIYYAH

This honourable lady looked after Prophet Muḥammad (s) for a few years and was also his wet nurse. Her husband was al-Ḥārith ibn 'Abd al-Uzzah al-Sa'dī. As was customary in Arabia, young infants would be taken from their mothers and fed by certain ladies from outside the city. They would be trained in the difficulties of the nomadic lifestyle and taught the ability to deal with hardships.

'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the grandfather of the Prophet (s), selected Ḥalimah Sa'diyyah, who gradually discovered the blessings associated with the Prophet (s). She was fortunate enough to witness several miracles and later embraced Islam alongside her husband

53 *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'immaḥ Baqī'*, p. 290–291.

* Image below: The grave of Ḥalimah Sa'diyyah



and was praised by the Prophet (s), who granted her forty camels and goats.⁵⁴ Some narrations point to the Prophet (s) interceding for her on the Day of Judgment.⁵⁵ Her date of death is unknown.

Several witnesses have recorded that the grave of Ḥalimah was amongst those that had a dome. One such witness is al-Nā'ib al-Ṣadr al-Shirāzī (d.1306 AH), as well as Sir Richard Burton, who cited the existence of a dome on her grave.⁵⁶ The date of the building of the dome is unknown.

‘ALĪ IBN JA‘FAR AL-ṢĀDIQ AL-‘URAYDĪ (A)

One of the children of Imam al-Ṣādiq (a), ‘Alī, was young when his father passed away. Raised and educated by his brother Imam al-Kāzīm (a), he served the Imams and was an established scholar, living until the time of the tenth Imam; Imam al-Hādī (a). Scholars like ‘Allāmah Majlisī and Sheikh al-Kulaynī have documented his piety and devotion in several narrations. He lived in an area known as ‘Urayd, which is four miles outside of Medina. Hence he was known as ‘al-‘Uraydī.’ He died in this village, and had a domed shrine that was visited by the faithful.⁵⁷

Eventually, his son and grandson were buried adjacent to him in a well-known mosque. In 1423 AH (2002), his shrine was destroyed by the authorities using dynamite, and his body was transferred to Baqī.⁵⁸ Eyewitness accounts point to the body being completely intact, and his grave being near the wall next to the graves of the Imams (a).

ṢAFIYYAH BINT ‘ABD AL-MUṬṬALIB

Ṣafiyyah, the aunt of the Prophet (s) and Imam ‘Alī (a), was the mother of Zubayr ibn Awwām (who fought Imam ‘Alī (a) in the Battle of Jamal). She was born 53 years before migration, in the same year as the Prophet’s birth, in Makkah. Her husband was al-Awwām ibn Khuwaylid, the brother of Khadijah (a) (the wife of the Prophet (s)).

54 *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa’d*, vol. 1, p. 113.

55 Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 14, p. 67.

56 *Tārīkh Ḥaram A‘immah Baqī*, p. 268.

57 *Mustadrak al-Wasā’il*, vol. 3, p. 626.

58 Irfan Al Alawi, ‘The Destruction of the Holy Sites in Makkah and Medina,’ *The Islamic Monthly*, 1 January 2006. <http://theislamicmonthly.com/the-destruction-of-the-holy-sites-in-Mekkah-and-Medina>. Accessed 2 July 2016.

She embraced Islam and migrated to Medina, and was a narrator of *ḥadīth*. She was known for her eloquence and bravery, as well as her patience.

She helped Lady Fāṭimah (a) during the birth of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a), and is famously credited for killing a spy before the Battle of Khaybar. She was, tragically, a witness to the mutilated body of her brother Ḥamzah in Uhud, and was heavily grieved by his martyrdom. Like her sister, she was acknowledged for her poetic ability, leaving a number of poems that are attributed to her. She died in 20 AH, at the age of 73 and was buried in Baqī'.

For many years, her grave in Baqī' was not part of the cemetery, but was later joined due to the expansion. Historical works also suggest that a dome was erected during the thirteenth century AH, despite others like al-Samhūdī (d.911) not mentioning the presence of such a dome during his lifetime.⁵⁹

59 *Al-Baqī' al-Gharqad*, p. 132.

* Image below: The graves of the aunts of the Prophet (s): Ṣāfiyyah bint 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib and 'Ātikah bint 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib



‘ĀTIKAH BINT ‘ABD AL-MUṬṬALIB

Lady ‘Ātikah was another aunt of the Prophet (s) and Imam ‘Alī (a). Her mother was Fāṭimah bint Amr al-Makhzūmī and her husband was Abū Umayyah al-Makhzūmī. She embraced Islam in Makkah and migrated to Medina. She was well known as a poet, and some of her poetry has survived until today.

Due to the existence of a seemingly prominent grave next to the grave of Ṣafīyyah, people started attributing it to ‘Ātikah. Though it is likely she is buried somewhere in Baqī’, there is very little historical evidence to suggest she is buried next to Ṣafīyyah.

LADY UMM AL-BANĪN (A)

Known as the ‘Mother of Sons’, this honourable lady was the devout wife of Imam ‘Alī (a). Her name was Fāṭimah bint Hizām al-Kilābiyyah and she was the mother of Abū al-Faḍl al-‘Abbās (a), ‘Uthmān, Ja’far, and ‘Abdullāh. All four fought and were martyred alongside Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) on 10 Muḥarram 61 AH.

Her marriage to Imam ‘Alī (a) was recommended by his brother ‘Aqīl who was an expert in genealogy and was aware that his brother required a wife who hailed from a family known for its bravery and chivalry. Umm al-Banīn (a) lived her role as a servant of the Ahl al-Bayt with great loyalty and devotion. She wholeheartedly encouraged her sons to serve the family of the Prophet (s) and later became distinguished for her poetry which lamented her slain sons. She passed away on 13 Jumādā al-Thānī 64 AH.



One cannot find any historical evidence which points to the grave of Umm al-Banīn (a) in the area next to the aunts of the Prophet (s). Astonishingly, it seems that it was attributed by some pilgrims who used to congregate in that area and recite *ziyārah* for this noble lady. Unfortunately, some modern-day *ziyārah* texts have also followed suit, without carefully checking historical references.

So where is the grave of Umm al-Banīn (a)? Unfortunately, historical records have been virtually silent on this. It is likely that she is buried next to the other wives and children of Imam 'Alī (a) in Baqī'. The Imam had many sons and daughters from several wives,⁶⁰ and the exact location of their graves in Baqī' is unknown. For example, the grave of Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah, the well-known pious son of the Imam, is also unidentified. It is, therefore, apt to recite the *ziyārah* for Umm al-Banīn anywhere in this blessed cemetery.⁶¹

MARTYRS OF UḤUD

Some of those injured at the Battle of Uḥud died upon their return to Medina, and were subsequently buried in Baqī'. Most of the seventy who were martyred during the battle were buried at the site of Uḥud.

MARTYRS OF ḤARRAH

In the year 63 AH, during the caliphate of Yazīd ibn Mu'āwīyah, the people of Medina staged an uprising in which 'Abdullāh ibn Ḥanzalah (a well-known leader in Medina) was at the helm. Yazīd was keen to crush this uprising and ordered Muslim ibn 'Aqabah to lead an army of one thousand soldiers to invade Medina and quash the rebellion.

The city was savagely attacked and thousands were killed, including a few hundred companions of the Holy Prophet (s). Dogs and horses carelessly urinated on the grave

60 Narrations point to eight or nine ladies, including Umāmah, Khawlah, Umm Ḥabīb, Laylā bint Mas'ūd, Asmah bint Umays and more.

61 On reflection, it seems that the respect Umm al-Banīn had for the Lady of Light, Faṭimah, is such that her grave is also hidden and unknown, like the beloved daughter of the Prophet (s), Faṭimah (a). It is recorded in history that Umm al-Banīn did not want to be called Faṭimah since the remembrance of the name upset the Imams al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn as well as Lady Zaynab and Lady Umm Kulthūm.

* Image opposite: The graves of the aunts of the Prophet (s). There is no evidence that Lady Umm al-Banīn (a) is buried in this area.



Martyrs of Ḥarrab and some Martyrs of Uhud

of the Prophet (s) and over a thousand virgin Muslim women were raped. Not content with this, Yazīd's barbarians killed many of these women and they were buried in Baqī'. The army then moved on from Medina towards the Holy Ka'bah, which they attacked with fire catapults, severely damaging the house of God.⁶²

OTHERS BURIED IN BAQĪ'

The following are some names of notable individuals that have been mentioned in historical works, who are said to be buried in the Cemetery of Baqī'. Due to the expansion of the cemetery, others may have been included as well, therefore the list is not exhaustive.

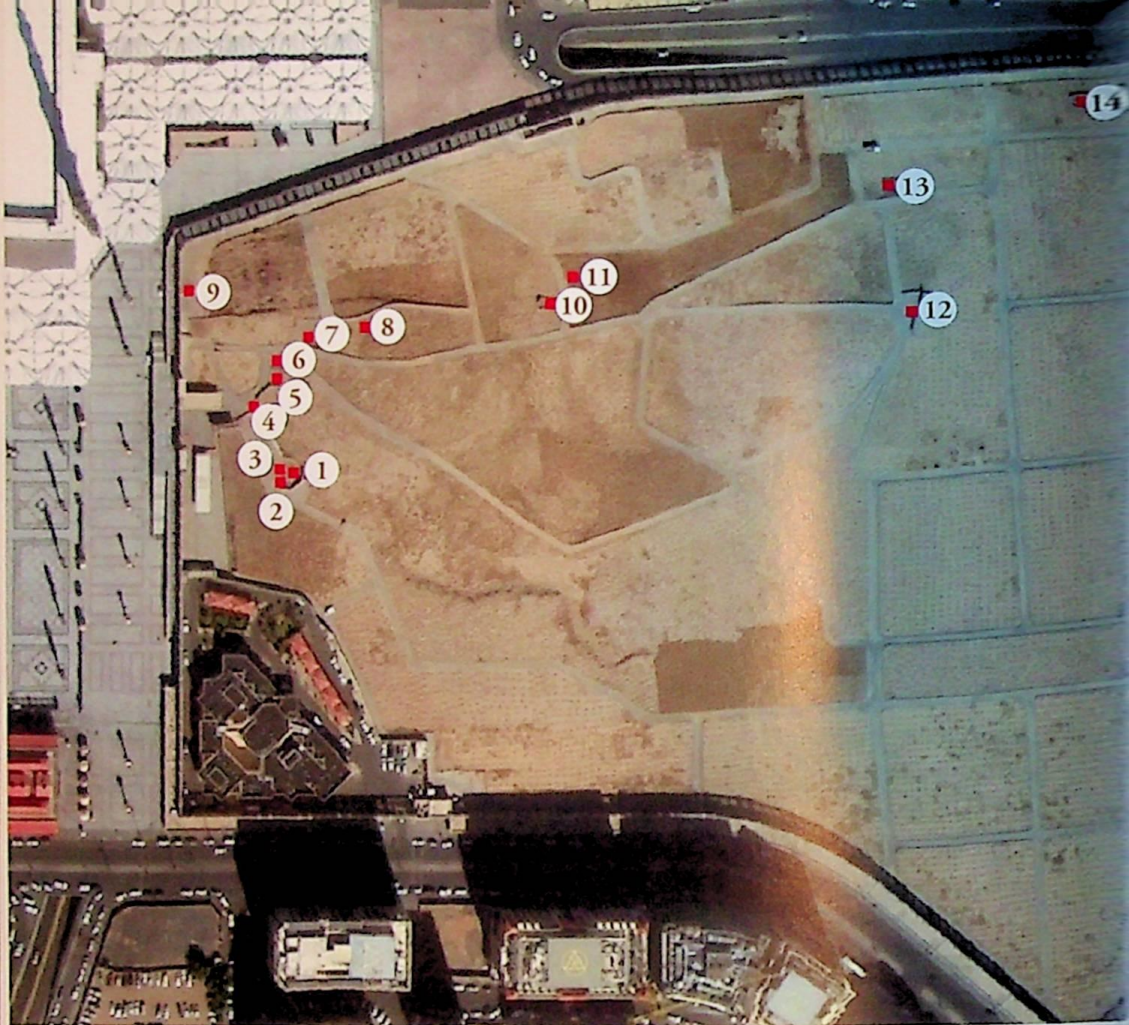
1. Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyah, the son of Imam 'Alī (a)
2. Ḥasan, the son of Imam al-Ḥasan (a)
3. Ḥasan, the son of Imam al-Sajjād (a)
4. Ḥasan, the son of Imam al-Ṣādiq (a)
5. Muḥammad ibn Zayd ibn 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (a)

62 *Tārīkh al-Ya'qūbī*, vol. 2, p. 116. *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 8, p. 236. *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 4, p. 372.



The graves of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī and Sa'd ibn Mu'āḍ

6. Miqdād ibn Aswad
7. Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh AnṢārī
8. 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'
9. Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī
10. Usāmah ibn Zayd
11. Zayd ibn Thābit
12. Mālik ibn Anas
13. Abū Hurayrah
14. As'ad ibn Zurārah
15. Al-Ḥasan al-Muthannā
16. Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqās
17. Sa'd ibn Mu'āḍ
18. 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf



A satellite view of the main area within the Baqī' Cemetery

- | | |
|--|--|
| ① Four Imams of Ahl al-Bayt | ⑧ Ibrāhīm, the son of the Prophet (s) |
| ② Fāṭimah bint Asad | ⑨ Aunties of the Prophet (s) |
| ③ 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib | ⑩ Martyrs of Ḥarrah and Martyrs of Uḥud |
| ④ Daughters of the Prophet (s) | ⑪ Ismā'il ibn Ja'far al-Šādiq (a) |
| ⑤ Wives of the Prophet (s) | ⑫ 'Uthmān ibn Maẓ'ūn |
| ⑥ 'Aqil ibn Abū Ṭālib + 'Abdullāh ibn Ja'far | ⑬ Ḥalimah Sa'diyyah |
| ⑦ Imam Mālik and Nāfi' | ⑭ Abū Sa'id al-Khudrī and Sa'd ibn Mu'ad |

CHAPTER SIX

SHRINES OF PERSONALITIES FROM THE AHL AL-SUNNAH

An objective analysis of Islamic history reveals how all Muslims, whether Sunni, Shia, or otherwise, accepted the importance of building shrines and worked towards their maintenance. Outside of the Shia world, one finds numerous examples to support this. The shrine of Abū Ḥanīfah in Baghdad, the shrine of Imam Shāfi'ī in Egypt, the Mosque of Imam al-Ḥusayn and his holy head in Cairo, and the shrine of Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī in Turkey are just a few examples. Similarly, it was not only the Shia who built domes and shrines in Baqī' throughout the years, but records show several shrines were also built for revered personalities in the Sunni world.

THE GRAVE OF 'UTHMĀN IBN 'AFFĀN

'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (d.656) was the third Muslim caliph after Prophet Muḥammad (s). At the age of 67, he succeeded 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. He married two of the Prophet's adopted daughters, Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthūm (after the former had died he married the latter).

After 'Uthmān was killed, he was buried outside Baqī' in an area known as 'Hash Kawkab.' This was a Jewish area outside of the cemetery. When Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam became the governor of Medina during the caliphate of Mu'āwiyah, he removed the wall between Baqī' and the Hash area, thereby including the grave of 'Uthmān inside the cemetery. He subsequently removed the rock that was placed by the Prophet (s) on the grave of 'Uthmān ibn Maz'ūn (the first of the migrants to be buried in Baqī') and placed it on the grave of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān instead. Mu'āwiyah was keen to ensure the grave of Ibn Maz'ūn would not be identified, and said: 'By God, there should not

be a stone of the grave of 'Uthmān ibn Maz'ūn in case it is identified!'¹

The grave of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān was one that had a dome to make it stand out. This is recorded by the explorer Ibn Jubayr (d.614 AH) who stated that the dome was small. Later, Ibn Najjār (d.643) claimed that the dome was elevated. The existence of the dome, which is likely to have been built in the sixth century AH, is confirmed by historians like al-Samhūdī,² and witnessed by travellers such as Ibn Bāshā and al-Shīrāzī. It too was destroyed in 1925 by the Saudi authorities. Today, many visitors mistake the grave of Uthmān ibn Maz'ūn to be the grave of Uthmān ibn 'Affān. The latter is buried towards the end of the cemetery.

THE GRAVES OF IMAM MĀLIK AND NĀFI³

Mālik ibn Anas was born in 93 AH, and was a student of Imam al-Ṣādiq (a). His compilation of narrations is titled the Muwaṭṭa'. He is the founder of the Mālikī jurisprudential school of thought. Al-Samhūdī narrates an important encounter in the life of Mālik:³

1 *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 3, p. 387; *Wafā al-Wafā*, vol. 3, p. 894.

2 *Wafā al-Wafā*, vol. 3, p. 919.

3 *Ibid*, vol. 4, p. 1376.



Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr was in the Mosque of the Prophet (s) and asked Mālik: 'O Abā Abdillāh, should I face the qibla and supplicate or should I face the Prophet (s)?

He (Mālik) replied: 'Why should you turn away from the Prophet (s), as he is your intercessor and the intercessor of your father Ādam to Allah on the Day of Judgment? You should face him and seek his shafā'ah (intercession), since Allah says:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٦٤﴾

'We did not send any apostle but to be obeyed by Allah's leave. Had they, when they wronged themselves, come to you and pleaded to Allah for forgiveness, and the Apostle had pleaded for forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allah All-Clement, All-Merciful.'

(Holy Qur'an, 4:64)

This narration, amongst many others, points to the permissibility of seeking intercession as well as indicating its wide practice by Muslims for centuries.

Mālik passed away in Medina during the year 179 AH at the age of 85 and was buried in Baqī'. A study of the books detailing the history of Medina reveals that the building of the shrine of Imam Mālik ibn Anas probably occurred in the fifth century AH. Ibn Jubayr (d. 614 AH) writes: 'The grave of Mālik ibn Anas, the Imam of Medina (ra), has a small dome with a modest construction.'⁴ Others, such as al-Samhūdī and Shīrāzī agree with this.

Next to the dome of Mālik, historians have also recorded the existence of another dome, likely to be of Nāfi', the servant of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar.⁵ Nāfi' was known to be a scholar of jurisprudence. It is also suggested that the dome could be of Nāfi' ibn 'Abd al-Rahman, who was known to be a teacher of Qur'anic recitation.

4 Rihlat Ibn Jubayr, as cited in Tārīkh Ḥaram A'imma Baqī', p. 282.

5 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar is the famous companion of the Prophet (s), who narrated many traditions and was the son of the second caliph, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.

* Image opposite: The graves of Imam Mālik and Nāfi'



CHAPTER SEVEN

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

IS LADY FĀṬIMAH (A) BURIED IN BAQĪ' ?

According to traditions, Lady Fāṭimah (a) requested her burial to be at night and in secret, so that the exact location of the grave would be unknown. This was indeed fulfilled by Imam 'Alī (a). The secrecy was because of the oppression she endured after the sad demise of her beloved father by the ruling establishment. At the same time, scholars have limited the possibilities of where Lady Fāṭimah (a) is buried to three locations.

1. BURIED IN HER HOUSE

This is supported by several reliable traditions. For example, when Imam al-Riḍā (a) was asked about the location of the grave of Fāṭimah (a), he replied: 'She was buried in her house when Banī Umayyah expanded the mosque. Therefore, the house became part of it.'¹ Many Shia scholars, such as Sheikh al-ṣadūq, 'Allāmah Majlisī, Sheikh al-Mufīd, and Sheikh al-Ṭūsī are of this opinion.²

Based on this opinion, the Lady of Light's grave is next to the grave of her father, the Holy Messenger Muḥammad (s). This is on the acceptance of the notion that the Prophet (s) is buried in his daughter's house. Additionally, many narrations point to the request of Imam al-Ḥasan (a) to be buried next to the Prophet (s). This was rejected by 'Ā'ishah and he was eventually buried in Baqī'.

1 'Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā, p. 311.

2 Wasā'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 14, p. 369, h. 19407; Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid, p. 653.

2. BURIED IN THE RAWḌAH³

Other traditions point to this possibility. One report suggests that Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) explained that the existence of the grave of Fāṭimah (a) was the very reason for the sacredness of the Rawḍah. However, others still have rejected this idea, due to the existence of seemingly unclear traditions. For instance, Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) was asked by Balī Yūnus ibn Ya'qūb on whether praying in the house of Fāṭimah (a) was better than in the Rawḍah. He replied: 'Praying at the place of burial would be more worthy.'⁴

3. BURIED IN THE CEMETERY OF BAQĪ'

Many Shia scholars have dismissed the suggestion that Lady Fāṭimah (a) is buried in Baqī'. Examples include Sheikh al-Ṭūsī and 'Allāmah al-Hillī.⁵ They explain that it is likely people have confused her grave with that of the grave of Imam 'Alī's mother, Fāṭimah bint Asad (a).

THE OPINION OF SUNNI SCHOLARS REGARDING THE GRAVE OF FĀṬIMAH (A)

1. IN HER HOUSE

One of the earliest historians of Medina, Ibn Shabbah, believes Lady Fāṭimah (a) is buried in her house.⁶

2. IN BAQĪ' (OUTSIDE MAIN AREA)

Some of the scholars believe that the honourable Lady is buried in Baqī', but not within the sacred area of the Imams (a). Several different options pinpointing varying

3 This is the area between the grave and the pulpit of the Prophet (s), known as the 'Rawḍah of Paradise'. Many narrations point to the sacredness of this area, and Muslims scramble to find space and perform prayers there.

4 *Wasā'il al-Shi'ah*, vol. 5, p. 284, h. 6560.

5 *Al-Muntahā*, vol. 2, p. 889; *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*, vol. 6, p. 10.

6 *Tārīkh al-Madīnah*, vol. 1, p. 108.

locations within Baqī' have been proposed by different scholars.⁷

3. IN BAQĪ' NEXT TO THE IMAMS



The site of the burial of the four Imams of Ahl al-Bayt

This is the opinion of most Sunni scholars, who believe that Lady Fāṭimah (a) is buried adjacent to the grave of Imam al-Ḥasan (a) in Jannat al-Baqī'.⁸ The basis for this inference seems to be related to the narration attributed to Imam al-Ḥasan (a), where he reportedly said: 'Bury me next to the grave of my mother Fāṭimah.'⁹

In response, the following points should be noted:

- Numerous narrations point to the fact that Lady Fāṭimah (a) wanted her grave to be hidden, and therefore she was buried at night. Imam al-Ḥasan (a) would not expose the grave of his mother in such a way.
- If this narration is to be accepted, then the word '*umm*' can mean 'grandmother'

⁷ *Wafā al-Wafā*, vol. 3, p. 901.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 901.

⁹ *Akhbār al-Madīnah*, p. 154.

as well as 'mother', and this usage is well known.

- The grave of Imam al-Ḥasan's grandmother, Fāṭimah bint Asad (a), is established as being in Baqī' and next to the graves of the Imams. Many Sunni and Shia sources mention this.
- This opinion has caused uncertainty in the minds of some historians, who struggled to identify the location of the grave of Fāṭimah bint Asad. Ibn Shabbah, for example, stated that she was buried in Bayt al-~~Abzān~~ (the House of Sorrows),¹⁰ whilst al-Samhūdī (d.911 AH) claimed that she was buried next to the graves of Ibrāhīm (the Prophet's son) and 'Uthmān ibn Ma'ṣūm.¹¹
- It is very likely that spreading the belief that Lady Fāṭimah (a) is buried in Baqī' was encouraged to conceal the fact that she died angry with the first caliph, Abū Bakr, and her request that he and 'Umar should not attend her funeral.¹²

The difference of opinion regarding the location of Lady Fāṭimah's (a) grave has culminated in some scholars, such as al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī and al-Narāqī, recommending the recitation of her *ziyārah* in all three locations mentioned above.¹³ Others, such as Sheikh al-Ṭūsī,¹⁴ have commented that it is recommended to recite the *ziyārah* at two places, namely next to the Prophet (s) and the Rawḍah. Regardless, the fact that the grave of Lady Fāṭimah (a) is hidden reveals the extent of the oppression she faced, and that the exact location will in fact be revealed by her grandson, the Awaited Saviour and God's representative, Imam al-Mahdī (a), upon his reappearance.

10 *Tārīkh al-Madīnah*, vol. 1, p. 123.

11 *Wafā al-Wafā*, vol. 3, p. 895.

12 See *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 4, book. 53, no. 325: Narrated by 'Ā'ishah: 'After the death of Allah's Apostle, Fāṭimah the daughter of Allah's Apostle, asked Abū Bakr al-Siddiq to give her share of inheritance from what Allah's Apostle had left of the *fay*' (i.e., booty gained without fighting) which Allah (swt) had given him. Abū Bakr said to her, "Allah's Apostle said, 'Our property will not be inherited, whatever we (i.e., Prophets) leave is *sadaqah* (to be used for charity).'" Fāṭimah, the daughter of Allah's Apostle, became angry and stopped speaking to Abū Bakr, and continued assuming that attitude till she died. Fāṭimah remained alive for six months after the death of Allah's Apostle. She used to ask Abū Bakr for her share from the property of Allah's Apostle which he left at Khaybar, and Fadak, and his property at Medina (devoted for charity). Abū Bakr refused to give her that property and said, "I will not leave anything Allah's Apostle used to do, because I am afraid that if I left something from the Prophet's tradition, then I would go astray."

13 *Al-Durūs al-Shar'īyyah*, vol. 2, p. 6.

14 *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*, vol. 6, p. 9.

IS IMAM 'ALĪ (A) BURIED IN BAQĪ' ?

The reader might be surprised at this question; however, one or two historians have bizarrely suggested that the body of Imam 'Alī (a) was somehow brought back from Kufa and buried in Jannat al-Baqī'. One of them is Ibn 'Asākir, in his famous work *Tārīkh Dimashq*, where he states: 'al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī carried the body of 'Alī, after the peace treaty with Mu'āwiyah, and buried him in Medina. It is said that he is buried in Baqī' with Fāṭimah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (s).'¹⁵

This suggestion is, of course, rejected due to numerous traditions and historical evidence pointing to Imam 'Alī (a) being buried in Gharī (Najaf). His shrine has been visited by millions for hundreds of years, and has been established as the place of his burial by the overwhelming majority of Sunni and Shia Scholars.

WAS THE HEAD OF IMAM AL-ḤUSAYN (A) BURIED IN BAQĪ' ?

Some narrations have suggested that the blessed head of the grandson of the Prophet (s), Imam al-Ḥusayn (a), was eventually buried in this cemetery. Ibn Sa'd narrates:

Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiyah sent the head of al-Ḥusayn to his governor in Medina, 'Amr ibn Sa'īd. The latter placed a shroud over it and buried it next to the grave of his mother Fāṭimah, the daughter of the Prophet (s).¹⁶

Others have suggested that the blessed head was buried in Damascus, Egypt, or Najaf. The most accepted opinion amongst Shia scholars, however, is that the blessed head was reunited with the body and buried in Karbala. This is documented by well-known scholars such as al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā¹⁷ and 'Allāmah Majlisī.¹⁸

WHAT EVENTS OCCURRED WITHIN BAQĪ' ?

Narrations record many incidents that have occurred within this important area in

15 *Tārīkh Dimashq*, vol. 42, p. 566.

16 *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 5, p. 237; *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 8, p. 222.

17 *Rasā'il al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā*, vol. 3, p. 130.

18 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 17, p. 139.

the city of Medina. This is not surprising, given the regular visitation to Baqī' and its proximity to the centre of the city. Some examples follow.

1. REVELATION OF QUR'ANIC VERSES

It is narrated that Prophet Muḥammad (s) was sitting in Baqī' when he said: 'Oh people who have attended. If hardship enters a rock, ease would come and remove it.'¹⁹ Thereafter, Allah (swt) revealed:

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٦﴾

'Verily with difficulty comes ease. Indeed, with difficulty comes ease'
(Holy Qur'an, 94:5-6)

2. ABANDONING THE PROPHET (S)

'Allāmah al-Ṭabarsī narrates:

The people of Medina faced famine and increasing prices. Ḍāhiyyah ibn Khalīfah came from Damascus selling oil. The Prophet (s) was reciting the Friday sermon, when people saw Ḍāhiyyah they left the Messenger. They went to Baqī' to meet Ḍāhiyyah, lest they lose out. Allah (swt) then revealed the verses:

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً أَوْ لَهْوًا انفَضُّوا إِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوكَ قَائِمًا قُلْ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ
مِّنَ اللَّهِو وَمِنَ التِّجَارَةِ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الرَّزُقِينَ ﴿١١﴾

'When they see a deal or a diversion, they scatter off towards it and leave you standing! Say, "What is with Allah is better than diversion and dealing, and Allah is the best of providers"'

(Holy Qur'an, 62:11)²⁰

¹⁹ *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 6, p. 364.

²⁰ *Majma' al-Bayān*, vol. 10, p. 11.



An old image of the City of Medina

3. DISPUTE OVER THE PROPHET'S BURIAL

Some historical records point to the discussion that took place after the sad demise of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (s) amongst the Muslims. Al-Kulaynī reports:

It is narrated from Abā Abdillāh (i.e., Imam al-Ṣādiq) (a) that he said: 'Abbās came to the Commander of the Faithful and said: 'People have gathered to bury the Messenger of Allah (s) at Baqī' (...)'

The Commander of the Faithful then addressed the people and said: 'O people, verily the Messenger of Allah (s) is a leader, both alive and when dead', and he said, 'I will be buried at the place where I die (...)' ²¹

4. THE EULOGIES OF UMM AL-BANĪN

Following the tragedy of Karbala, historians have documented the numerous occasions that the wife of Imam 'Alī (a), Umm al-Banīn, visited Baqī'. Inside, she recited poetry and eulogised her sons who were martyred on the Day of Ashura in Karbala. This honourable lady sacrificed her four sons in defence of Islam and narrations state that the poetry was recited with passion, making people gather and weep. This included Marwān ibn Ḥakam who was known for his enmity towards the Ahl al-Bayt. He was

21 *Al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 451.

seen crying profusely due to her eulogies.²²

5. THE CALL WITHIN

Zurārah ibn A'yūn narrates: 'At night, one person heard the cry: "Where are the ascetics of this world? Where are the seekers of the afterlife?" A cry was heard from the direction of Baqī' (without seeing who it is) say: "That is 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (a)"'.²³

6. ABŪ SUFYĀN VISITS BAQĪ'

Whilst objecting to Mu'āwiyah and his actions, Imam al-Ḥasan (a) is reported to have said:

I ask you by Allah, did you know that when 'Uthmān assumed the caliphate, Abū Sufyān entered the Mosque of the Prophet (s) and told him, 'O brother, is there anyone looking?'

'Uthmān replied: 'No!'

Abū Sufyān then exclaimed: 'The caliphate is now in the hands of Banū Umayyah, I swear by my soul that there is no hell or heaven (...) ' Then he **took** the hands of al-Ḥusayn (a) and went to Baqī' and called with a loud voice: 'O **people** of the graves, that which you fought us over is now in our hands and you **are** dust!'

Al-Ḥusayn (a) angrily responded: 'May Allah disgrace your old age and face!' Then

22 *A'yān al-Shi'ah*, vol. 8, p. 389. *Maqātil al-Talibīn*, p. 56.

23 *Kitāb al-Irshād*, vol. 2, p. 142.

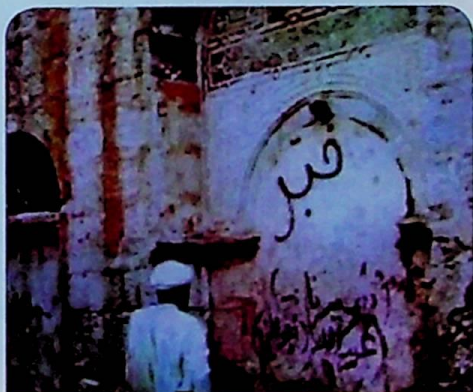


he left him in Baqī'. If it was not for Nu'mān ibn Bashīr, he (Abū Sufyān) would have perished.²⁴

WHERE IS THE GRAVE OF 'ABDULLĀH IBN 'ABD AL-MUṬṬALIB?

The father of the Prophet Muḥammad (s), 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, died before his son's birth by several months, whilst on a journey with a caravan of Quraysh (which was returning to Mekkah from Syria). 'Abdullāh had entered Medina on his way back, and was staying with the Banī Najjār tribe (as they were related to his wife, Āminah bint Wahab). He stayed in a house known as Dār al-Nābighah, which belonged to a man from the same tribe. He tragically fell ill and passed away, and was buried inside this house.

At the age of 6, the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (s) travelled with his mother Āminah to Medina and stayed in Dār al-Nābighah for an entire month. He, therefore, would have paid his respects to the grave of his father in that house.²⁵ After his migration to Medina, he was seen praying in that house on numerous occasions, hence a mosque was constructed there.²⁶ Later, the area was either known as Masjid al-Nābighah or the 'resting place of 'Abdullāh.' In



The grave of 'Abdullāh before destruction

In the tenth century AH, the mosque was renovated and a mausoleum was erected over the grave of 'Abdullāh. A *miḥrāb*²⁷ was also built next to the grave to encourage the performance of prayers in that mosque. This was renovated by some Ottoman rulers.²⁸

24 *Al-Ihtijāj*, vol. 2, p. 275. It is worth noting that Abū Sufyān was blind at this point, hence he requested to be guided into Baqī'.

25 *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd*, vol. 1, p. 73.

26 *Tārīkh al-Madīnah*, vol. 1, p. 64–65.

27 A place where the leader of the congregation would normally stand to perform the prayers.

28 *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'imma Baqī'*, p. 312.

Historians and visitors such as the Egyptian Raf'at Bāshā, as well as al-Mirandī and al-Shirāzī, have written about their visit to the mausoleum of 'Abdullāh. A traveller, Huṣām al-Saltānah, visited the site in 1297 AH and gave an account of the grave:

On Monday 10 Muḥarram, I left my house to visit the grave of 'Abdullāh, the father of the Prophet (s), as well as the visitation of the Imams of Baqī' (a). The grave of 'Abdullāh is found at

the Ṭawāl market (...) the door of the shrine was closed and so we waited until the mutawallī opened it for us. We entered and recited *ziyārah*. I saw a wooden *darih*, covered with cloth stitched by the mother of Sultan 'Abd al-Majīd during the reign of Sultan Ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz. We prayed two rak'ahs at the *mihrāb*, and there was a window that overlooked a garden. We thereafter left to the Baqī'.²⁹



Current site of the grave of 'Abdullāh opposite the Salaam gate

The building seemed to remain intact until 1976, although a wall was built in front of the door of this mosque to prevent entry. After 1976, it was destroyed by the authorities during the expansion of the Prophet's Mosque. Reports indicate that the grave is approximately opposite the Salaam gate, on the south-western side of the Prophet's Mosque today.

A thought-provoking narration regarding the grave of 'Abdullāh is found in the book *Muntahā al-A'māl* of Sheikh al-Qummī:

On one occasion, the Prophet (s) visited the grave of 'Abdullāh, performed two units of *ṣalāh*, and called out to his father. Thereafter, the grave opened and his father said: 'I bear witness that there is no Lord but Allah, and you are His Messenger and Prophet (s).' The Prophet (s) then asked him: 'Who is your walī (authority after the Prophet (s))?' and upon asking 'Abdullāh was told, 'Alī is your walī.' 'Abdullāh then testified the same.³⁰

29 *Rihlat Makkah Huṣām al-Saltānah*, as cited in *Tārīkh Ḥaram A'imma Baqī'*, p. 314.

30 *Muntahā al-A'māl*, vol. 1, p. 22. This should not be surprising, since the Qur'an informs us of several examples of people who were brought back to life in this world by the permission of Allah (swt). For example, Uzayr (see Holy Qur'an 2:259).

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE DESTRUCTION OF BAQĪ^c

THE FIRST DESTRUCTION

In 1744 an important alliance was formed in the Arabian peninsula that would directly impact the future of the region and the world. Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb (d.1792), from the Najd region of Arabia, established the Wahhabi branch of Islam. He sought to refine Islamic principles according to his newfound philosophy. Essentially this entailed the rejection of many Muslim practices and labelling them instead as acts of polytheism. He later formed an alliance with Muḥammad ibn Sa'ūd (d.1765, who was the ruler of the al-Dir'iyyah region of Arabia) to form a new religious sect and gain political sovereignty. They both swore to work together to establish their new goal and gather strength. Ibn Sa'ūd's son married the daughter of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, further sealing the bond between the two men.

A few months after the agreement was signed, a systematic process of invasion across Hijaz took place. This was designed to capture the area from the control of the Ottoman Empire, who had ruled the Hijaz area since 1517. Many cities began to fall. This included Riyadh (in 1774) and al-Aḥsā (in 1795). In April 1801, the Saudi army invaded Karbala, and mercilessly attacked the blessed shrines of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) and his brother al-'Abbās (a), causing severe damage. Hundreds of people were killed and several gifts as well as precious objects belonging to the shrines were stolen.

A year later, the army invaded Mekkah. Upon entering, they destroyed mosques and historical sites as well as the famous Cemetery of al-Mu'allā. They brought down the domes that were erected for hundreds of years over the graves of noble people such as Khadijah and Abū Ṭālib, the uncle of the Prophet (s). They also destroyed the site of the birth of the Prophet Muḥammad (s) and that of the first caliph, Abū Bakr.



Jannatul Baqī' after destruction

Historians describe how the destruction was accompanied with a deeply offensive barrage of drum beating, singing, and cursing of the domes.¹

In 1805 (1220 AH), the army moved towards the holy city of Medina. They had placed a siege around the city for 18 months. Finally, after entering, the shrine of the Prophet (s) was looted, and all the domes and mausoleums in the Baqī' Cemetery were demolished. They were razed and the goods inside were looted and stolen.

One of the few historical records available today of people who saw Baqī' after its first destruction comes from the European historian J. L. Burckhardt, who visited Medina in 1815, nearly a decade after the initial destruction of the Baqī' by Wahhabi forces in 1806. In his book, *Travels in Arabia*, he describes the ruins and the state in which he found the cemetery:

¹ *Khulāṣat al-Kalām*, p. 279.

On the day after the pilgrim has performed his first duties at the mosque and the tomb, he usually visits the burial-ground of the town, in memory of the many saints who lie buried there. It is just beyond the town walls, near the gate of Bab Djoma, and bears the name of El Bekya. A square of several hundred paces is enclosed by a wall which, on the southern side, joins the suburb, and on the others, is surrounded with date-groves.

Considering the sanctity of the persons whose bodies it contains, it is a very mean place; and perhaps the most dirty and miserable burial-ground in any eastern town of the size of Medina. It does not contain a single good tomb, nor even any large inscribed blocks of stone covering tombs; but instead, mere rude heaps of earth, with low borders of loose stones placed about them. The Wahabys are accused of having defaced the tombs; and in proof of this, the ruins of small domes and buildings are pointed out, which formerly covered the tombs of Othman, Abbas, Setna Fatme, and the aunts of Mohammed, which owed their destruction to those sectaries (...).

The whole place is a confused accumulation of heaps of earth, wide pits, and rubbish, without a single regular tomb-stone. The pilgrim is made to visit several graves, and, while standing before them, to repeat prayers for the dead. Many persons make it their exclusive profession to watch the whole day near each of the principal tombs, with a handkerchief spread out, in expectation of the pilgrims who come to visit them; and this is the exclusive privilege of certain Ferrashyns and their families, who have divided the tombs among themselves, where each takes his post, or sends his servant in his stead.

The most conspicuous personages that lie buried here are Ibrahim, the son of Mohammed, who died in his youth; Fatme, his daughter, according to the opinion of many, who say that she was buried here, and not in the mosque; several of the wives of Mohammed; some of his daughters; his foster mother; Fatme, the daughter of Asad, and mother of Aly; Abbas ibn Abd el Motaleb; Othman ibn Affan, one of the immediate successors of Mohammed, who collected the scattered leaves of the Koran into one volume; the Martyrs, or Shohada, as they are called, who were slain here by the army of the heretics under Yezyd ibn Mawya, whose commander, Moslim, in A. H. 60, others say 62, came from Syria and sacked the town, the inhabitants of which had acknowledged the rebel Abdallah ibn Hantala

their chief; Hassan ibn Aly,² whose trunk only lies buried here, his head having been sent to Cairo, where it is preserved in the fine mosque called El Hassamya; the Imam Malek ibn Anes, the founder of the sect of the Malekites.

Indeed, so rich is Medina in the remains of great saints that they have almost lost their individual importance, while the relics of one of the persons just mentioned would be sufficient to render celebrated any other Moslim town. As a formula of the invocation addressed here to the manes of the saint, I shall transcribe that which is said with uplifted hands, after having performed a short prayer of two rikats, over the tomb of Othman ibn Affan: 'Peace be with thee, O Othman! Peace be with thee, O friend of the chosen! Peace be with thee O collector of the Koran! Mayest thou deserve the contentment of God! May God ordain Paradise as thy dwelling, thy resting-place, thy habitation, and thy abode! I deposit on this spot, and near thee, O Othman the profession everlasting, from this day to the Day of Judgment, that there is no God but God, and that Mohammed is his servant and his Prophet.'³

Interestingly, Burckhardt's observations not only demonstrate his witnessing of the terrible state of Jannat al-Baqi' following its woeful destruction, but also the way in which people were performing prayers and reciting *ziyārah* inside the cemetery. The authorities now strictly forbid these practices, and their occurrence in Baqi' would likely result in imprisonment and beating.

THE REBUILDING OF BAQĪ' CEMETERY

The destruction of the mausoleums, tombs, and domes within the famous Baqi' Cemetery triggered much uproar in the Muslim world, especially within the Ottoman Empire. The resultant effect being the Ottoman–Wahhabi war, which was fiercely fought from 1811 to 1818 between the Egyptian ruler Muḥammad 'Alī Pāshā (who was loyal to the Ottoman Empire), and the army of the the Emirate of al-Dir'iyyah, first Saudi state, headed by 'Abdullāh ibn Sa'ūd.

Pāshā sent his troops to the Hijaz region via sea, headed by his son Ibrāhīm. The

2 The author quite clearly confused Imam al-Ḥusayn with Imam al-Ḥasan (a), since no historical record at all suggests that Imam al-Ḥasan had his head sent anywhere.

3 *Travels in Arabia*, p. 222–5.

* Image opposite: Baqi' in 1890.

latter was successful in capturing several towns, defeating the Saudis and inflicting many casualties. In 1818, the resistance of the Saudis in Medina was broken, and the Ottoman army entered the city. Upon regaining control of the holy city, the Ottomans began to rebuild the shrines and mausoleums, including those of the Baqī' Cemetery. Donations and support poured in from different Muslim countries, and scholars from the Ottoman Empire supervised the reconstruction. Many domes were erected over the graves of well-known holy personalities buried in the cemetery.

One of those who witnessed the new shrines was the English explorer Sir Richard Francis Burton (d.1890). Between 1851–3, Burton disguised himself as a Muslim and travelled to Arabia. He wrote a two-volume book entitled *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Medinah and Mekkahh*. He describes in vivid detail the various places he visited in Medina, including the Baqī' Cemetery:

The Burial-place of the Saints is an irregular oblong surrounded by walls which relate to the suburb at their south-west angle.

The Darb al-Janazah separates it from the enceinte of the town, and the eastern Desert Road beginning from the Bab al-Jumah bounds it on the North. Around it palm plantations seem to flourish (...) Inside there are no flower-plots, no tall trees, in fact none of the refinements which lightens the gloom of a Christian burial-place: the buildings are simple, they might even be called mean. Almost all are the common Arab Mosque, cleanly whitewashed, and looking quite new. The





ancient monuments were levelled to the ground by Sa'ad the Wahhabi and his puritan followers, who waged pitiless warfare against what must have appeared to them magnificent mausolea, deeming as they did a loose heap of stones sufficient for a grave (...).

Walking down a rough narrow path, which leads from the western to the eastern extremity of Al-Bakia, we entered the humble mausoleum of the Caliph Osman (...). Then moving a few paces to the North, we faced Eastwards, and performed the Visitation of Abu Sa'id al-Khazari, a Sahib or Companion of the Prophet, whose sepulchre lies outside Al-Bakia. The third place visited was a dome containing the tomb of our lady Halimah, the Badawi wet-nurse who took charge of Mohammed (...). After which, fronting the North, we stood before a low enclosure, containing ovals of loose stones, disposed side by side. These are the Martyrs of Al-Bakia, who received the crown of glory at the hands of Al-Muslim, the general of the arch-heretic Yazid. The prayer here recited differs so little from that addressed to the martyrs of Ohod, that I will not transcribe it. The fifth station is near the centre of the cemetery at the tomb of Ibrahim, who died, to the eternal regret of Al-Islam, some say six months old, others in his second year (...).

The eighth station is at the tomb of Ukayl bin Abi Talib, brother of Ali. Then we visited the spot where lie interred all the Prophet's wives, Khadijah, who lies at Mekkahh, alone excepted. Mohammed married fifteen wives of whom nine survived him. After the Mothers of the Moslems, we prayed at the tombs of Mohammed's daughters, said to be ten in number.

Before leaving Al-Bakia, we went to the eleventh station, the Kubbat al-Abbasiyah, or Dome of Abbas. Originally built by the Abbaside Caliphs in A.H. 519, it is a larger and a handsomer building than its fellows, and it is situated on the right-

hand side of the gate as you enter. The crowd of beggars at the door testified to its importance: they were attracted by the Persians who assemble here in force to weep and to pray. Crossing the threshold with some difficulty, I walked around a mass of tombs which occupies the centre of the building, leaving but a narrow passage between it and the walls. It is railed round, and covered over with several 'Kiswahs' of green cloth worked with white letters: it looked like a confused heap, but it might have appeared irregular to me by the reason of the mob around. The Eastern portion contains the body of Al-Hasan, the son of Ali and grandson of the Prophet; the Imam Zaynal-Abidin, son of Al-Hosayn, and great-grandson to the Prophet; the Imam Mohammed al-Bakir (fifth Imam), son to Zaynal-Abidin; and his son the Imam J'afar al-Sadik, all four descendants of the Prophet, and buried in the same grave with Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib, uncle to Mohammed.⁴

THE SECOND DESTRUCTION OF BAQĪ'

Starting in 1924, the relentless clan of al-Sa'ūd began yet another attempt to take over the cities in Hijaz, engaging in some fierce fighting with the ruling *ashrāf* representing the Ottomans. Eventually, in 1925, and over a year after Mekkah had fallen, the Saudi army entered Medina. This was led by 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Sa'ūd. Initially, fearing a backlash from Muslims, al-Sa'ūd did not attack the shrines at Baqī', waiting for about five months before giving orders. He commanded one of his jurists, by the name of Qaḍī Sheikh 'Abdullāh ibn Bulayhid, to issue the edict allowing the destruction of all tombs and shrines in Medina. The jurist arrived in Medina during Ramadan 1344 AH, when he was presented with the following question:

What is the opinion of the Scholars of Medina, may Allah increase their knowledge and understanding, on the construction over graves and considering them as mosques? Is this permissible or not? If it is not permissible, and it is strongly prohibited, is it obligatory to destroy these places and forbid prayers taking place within them (...). Also, the actions of some ignorant people in these places, including touching them and supplicating to Allah, seeking nearness by slaughtering animals or by taking vows (...) are these permissible or not? What about next to the Prophet's chamber, where people face it during supplication and perform circumambulation around it, or touch it? Grant us the fatwa, may God

4 Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Medinah and Mekkahh, vol. 2, p. 222-4.

* Image opposite: A photo of Medina taken between 1870 - 1890.

reward you (...),⁵

The answer, dated 25 Ramadan 1344, was as follows:

We state, and from Allah (swt) we get assistance: the construction of buildings on top of graves is unanimously prohibited. This is due to the correct narrations pointing to this, and therefore many of the scholars have issued edicts on the obligation of destroying them. The basis for this is the *ḥadīth* of 'Alī (may Allah be pleased with him), where he said to Abī al-Ḥayāj: 'Should I not send you on the same mission as Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) sent me? Do not leave an image without obliterating it, or a high grave without levelling it.' Narrated by Muslim (in his *Saḥīh*).

As for the consideration of graves as mosques and praying within them, this is totally prohibited (...). As for what the ignorant do in the mausoleums by touching them and seeking proximity via slaughtering an animal or taking a vow or asking its people to intercede with Allah, it is forbidden and legally not permissible to perform. As for facing the Prophet's chamber during supplication, it is better to prohibit this since prohibition is essential part of the sect. The best direction is that of the qibla. As for circumambulating and touching these places, it is strictly forbidden.⁶

Based on this fatwa, on 8 Shawwāl 1344, the Ikhwān (Wahhabi soldiers) enforced the ruling by forcing the people of Medina to join them in the destruction of the tombs and mausoleums of Baqī'. They began levelling the constructions to the ground, reducing the beautiful shrines to rubble. Undoubtedly this was a horrifying sight, whereby no respect was shown to the glorious members



The Baqī' after its destruction in 1925

5 *Kashf al-Irtiyāb fī Atbā' Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb*, p. 287.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 288.

of the Prophet's family, nor his companions and the thousands of people buried in the cemetery.

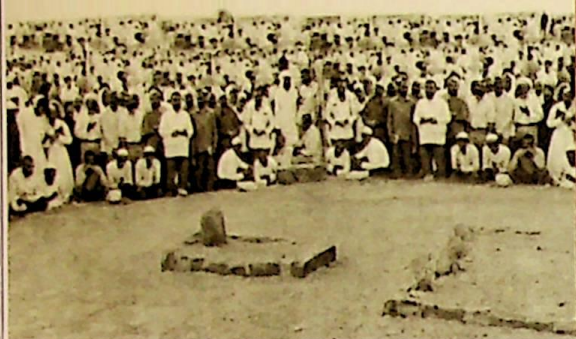
A well-known Iraqi sociologist, Dr 'Alī al-Wardī, has written extensively on social history and recounts a letter which was sent by a person who witnessed the barbaric destruction of that dark day:

I wanted to inform you that the entire Hijaz is now under the control of al-Sa'ūd. There is no one in this land that can now stand to oppose his commands and ways. A few days ago, the head of the jurists of the Wahhabis ('Abdullāh ibn Bulayhid) arrived in Medina. In one of his sessions, which was filled with scholars, he declared the prohibition of the visitation of graves, and that it is an innovation and act of polytheism against God. He urged that scholars of the four legal schools should agree on the destruction of the shrines and its razing to the ground. Based on this, the visitation of the shrines was prohibited and the doors have been closed. For over twenty days, we have not been able to visit the shrines. The Ikhwān have also prevented people from getting close to the Prophet's shrine or the visitation to the mistress of the women of the worlds (Fāṭimah). The chief jurist was not able to initially obtain the consensus of the scholars of Medina, however he placed fear amongst them, until they all ruled that the visitation of graves would be prohibited. This is in addition to the prohibition of touching them, seeking healing by them, or reciting *ziyārah*.

Thereafter, the command was declared to destroy the blessed shrines. The soldiers firstly looted whatever these holy mausoleums had, including expensive rugs, curtains, and fabrics. They then forced the people to take part and destroy the shrines.

The destruction was accompanied by a policy of instilling fear amongst the masses and punishing those who objected or did not follow orders. Reports state how those who recited *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah* in a shrine were whipped, whomsoever called





out the Prophet (s) by saying ‘yā rasūl Allāh’ was considered a polytheist, and he who swore by the name of the Prophet (s) or his family was declared an apostate.

As an example, a well-known Muslim scholar from Libya, Sayyid Aḥmad al-Sharīf al-Sanūsī (d.1351 AH) was expelled from Hijaz for standing to recite Sūrat al-Fātiḥah next to the grave of Lady Khadījah (a).⁷

AN ACCOUNT OF BAQĪ' AFTER ITS DESTRUCTION IN 1925

Eldon Rutter, a British traveller (born in 1894), visited the city of Medina as well as Mekkah and wrote a two-volume book entitled *The Holy Cities of Arabia*. The book contains comprehensive descriptions of what he saw and visited during his stay in that region. He visited the Cemetery of Baqī', and is perhaps one of the first to document what he witnessed after its destruction by the authorities in 1925:

On several Thursday afternoons I went with Amir or other acquaintances to visit the cemetery of El Bakia. The place is enclosed by a mud wall, and measures some 200 yards by 120 yards. It lies close to the eastern wall of the city. Ten thousand of the Prophet's companions are said to be buried here.

When I entered the Bakia the sight which I saw was as it were a town which has been razed to the ground. All over the cemetery nothing was to be seen but little indefinite mounds of earth and stones, pieces of timber, iron bars, blocks of stone, and a broken rubble of cement and bricks, strewn about. It was the broken remains of a town which had been demolished by an earthquake. Against the western wall lay great stacks of old wooden planks, and others of stone blocks, and of iron bars and railings. This was some of the scattered material, which had been collected and stacked in order. A few narrow paths had been cleared in the rubble, so that visitors might make their way to the further parts of the cemetery;

7 *The Compilation of 'Allāmah al-Balāghī*, vol. 6, p. 319.



but other signs of order there was none. All was a wilderness of ruined building material and tombstones – not ruined by a casual hand, but raked away from their places and small ground.⁸

The traveller continues the description by highlighting the fact that several domes used to exist in this cemetery:

Demolished and gone were the great white domes which formerly marked the graves of the members of Muhammad's family, of the Third Khalifa, Othman, of Imam Mālik, and of others. Lesser monuments had suffered a like fate, and even the little cages of jerid sticks, with which the poor cover the graves of their dead, had to all be crushed and thrown aside, or burnt.

We went forward to view some of the mounds which now marked the tombs of early Muslims who had made history. As we walked Aamir murmured continually 'I ask pardon of God!' and 'There is no power and no strength but in God!'⁹

THE WORLDWIDE REACTIONS TO THE DESTRUCTION

Muslims around the world expressed great outrage as the news of the desecration of the blessed shrines in Baqī' began to spread. Letters of condemnation as well as protests were recorded from several countries, including Iran, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, China, and Mongolia as well as India.¹⁰ The expressions of heartfelt sadness and sorrow were painfully evident, and it appears that the reaction fortunately prevented the Wahhabi establishment from demolishing the tomb and mausoleum of the Prophet Muḥammad (s) himself.

In Iraq, the grand religious authority Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan Isfahānī and other religious scholars of Najaf strongly condemned the destruction. In Qum, Ayatollah Ḥā'irī, the

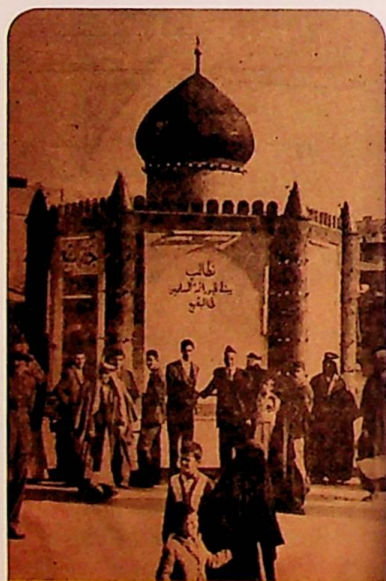
⁸ *The Holy Cities of Arabia*, p. 459.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 459.

¹⁰ *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, vol. 11, p. 44.

founder of the seminary of Qum, cried on the pulpit during class and stopped teaching in protest. The market of Qum was also closed.

In a response, somewhat characteristic of the government of Iran, the government announced a national day of mourning. Ayatollah Mudarris¹¹ (d. 1937) rallied parliament to form a commission to investigate the destruction of Baqī'. Following a detailed examination of the case, members of parliament fully objected to the Saudi dynasty's actions and decided to investigate further. They dispatched a delegation for inspection to Hijaz in 1925 and Ayatollah Husayn Burūjirdī¹² (d. 1961) reportedly sent his representative, Muḥammad Taqī Ṭāliqānī (Āl Aḥmad) to follow up the proceedings. Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn¹³ also went to Hijaz to analyse the situation and present back his findings. Some scholars of jurisprudence went as far as issuing fatwas for the reconstruction of the Baqī' shrines, ruling it to be obligatory.



Iraqis in Karbala demanding the rebuilding of Baqī' shrines in 1963

In Pakistan, and at the Islamic conference of Karachi, scholars such as Muḥammad Husayn Kāshif al-Ghiṭā and Muḥammad Taqī Ṭāliqānī (the representatives of Ayatollah Burūjirdī) spoke with the representatives of Saudi Arabia and stressed the reconstruction of the graves in Baqī'. In his trip to Hijaz, Ḥabībullah Khān Huwaydā (the Emir of Afghanistan from 1901 to 1919) met 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Sa'ūd (the king of Saudi Arabia at that time). According to his report, 'Abd al-'Azīz accused 'ignorant bedouins' of the demolition of the holy sites of Baqī' and acquitted himself of those actions.¹⁴

In 1963, Iraqis in Karbala built a symbolic shrine resembling the demolished domes of Baqī', to demand from the Islamic world the rebuilding of the shrines in the Cemetery.

11 Prominent Iranian Scholar and activist.

12 Leading Grand Ayatollah in Iran.

13 A well known Lebanese Shia scholar who died in 1952.

14 Wahhabism, accessed via al-islam.org.

ATTEMPTS TO REBUILD THE BAQĪ' CEMETERY

Since its second destruction in 1925, several attempts to convince the Saudi authorities to rebuild the ancient Cemetery of Baqī' have been recorded. Some were disclosed whilst other attempts remain unknown. Below are some attempts that I could ascertain.

1. 'Allāmah Sheikh 'Abd al-Raḥīm Ḥā'irī (author of *al-Fuṣūl al-Gharawīyah*)¹⁵

Sheikh Ḥā'irī was a well known and respected Shia scholar who died in 1367 AH in Iran. He was credited for his expertise in the Arabic language and extensive knowledge of certain branches of Islamic teachings, such as jurisprudence. At the same time, he commanded respect from a few influential leaders at that time including the Saudi king 'Abd al-'Azīz Āl Sa'ūd.¹⁶ Of his achievements, his son Sheikh Maḥdī says: 'People are unaware how some of the Baqī' Cemetery was preserved, and who delicately prevented its complete destruction.'

In 1926, a year after the destruction, Sheikh Ḥā'irī decided to travel to Saudi to perform the hajj. He was given assurances of security by the Saudi ambassador. Upon completing the pilgrimage, he met with the Saudi king. Equipped with a strong command and eloquence in Arabic, Sheikh Ḥā'irī quickly impressed the king, who welcomed him to his palace. The Sheikh outlined his disappointment (unrelated to an official request by the government of Iran and the Iranian hajj delegation) regarding the destruction of the Baqī' Cemetery. To the surprise of those in attendance, the king expressed a willingness to rebuild the cemetery. Sheikh Ḥā'irī thereafter proposed the construction of buildings over the graves, thereby allowing the visitors to pay their respects appropriately whilst avoiding the often harsh conditions such as the rays of the sun.

According to 'Allāmah's son, the king then kissed the hands of the Sheikh and bid farewell to him. Thereafter, he ordered his office to send the following communication to 'Allāmah Ḥā'irī:

From 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fayṣal to the respected, virtuous, honourable Sheikh 'Abd al-Raḥīm, the author of *al-Fuṣūl*.

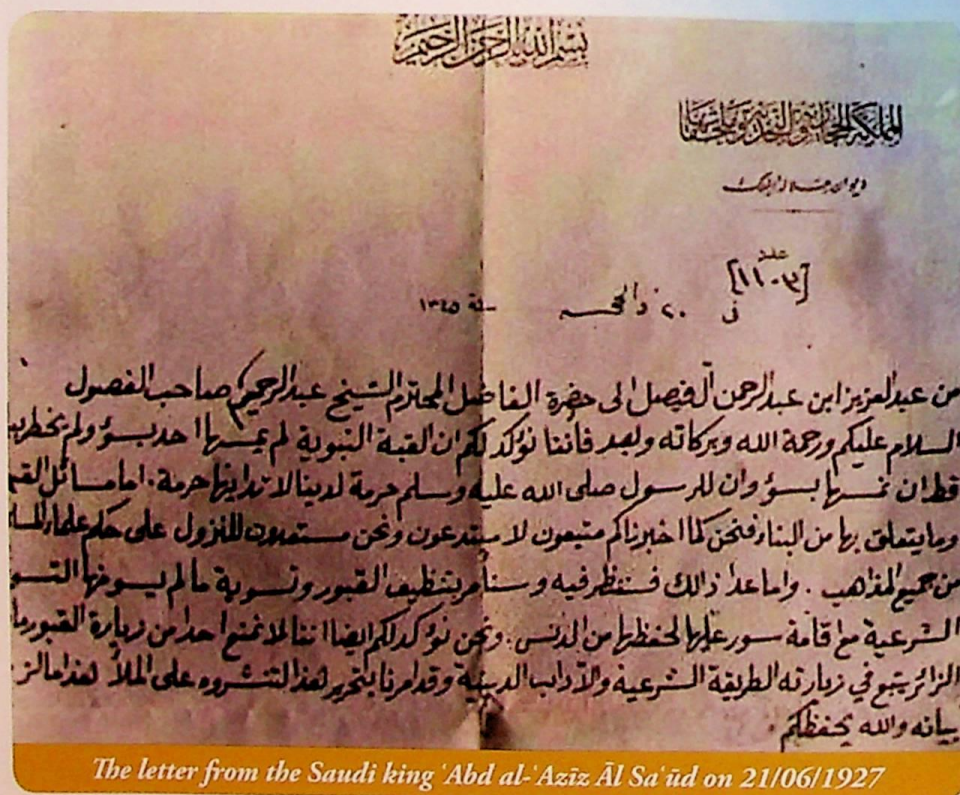
Peace and blessings be upon you.

15 An important classical text on the principles of Islamic jurisprudence.

16 The first monarch and the founder of Saudi Arabia.

We would like to emphasise that the Prophetic dome will not be mistreated by anyone. This has not crossed our minds at all, since the sacredness of the Messenger, peace be upon him, is above anything else which is sacred. As for the graves (of Baqī') and what is associated with it regarding its construction, as we informed you we are followers and not innovators. We are ready to submit to the rulings of the Muslim scholars of all sects. With regards to other matters (on Baqī'), we will study (the proposals) and order that the graves are cleaned and levelled appropriately in accordance with the shariah. We will also keep a fence around them to protect them from impurities.

We would like to emphasise to yourselves that we will not prohibit anyone from the visitation of the graves as long as the visitor performs what is permitted according to the shariah as well as religious etiquette. We have ordered that this statement is distributed amongst the people. This is what we wanted to clarify. May God protect you.



'Allāmah Ḥā'irī persevered with his objective of rebuilding Baqī'. He sent this document to the UN as well as the Egyptian authorities, and reminded the Saudi king of his promise after reports of Iranian pilgrimages being harassed in Saudi were received.

Unfortunately, due to political pressure and the influence of external countries as well as the Iranian government, the promise of the Saudi king was unfulfilled. However, according to 'Allāmah's son, the preservation of the area where the four Imams are buried as well as other prominent graves is due to the efforts of Sheikh Ḥā'irī. This includes the small wall around the four stones, as well as its separation from other graves.¹⁷

2. Sayyid Mūsā al-Ṣadr

Another prominent scholar who engaged in discussions with Salafi scholars on the matter of Baqī' was the Lebanese leader Sayyid Mūsā al-Ṣadr¹⁸. In an interview he gave with the *Ḥawādith* magazine, he said:

In 1962, Sayyid Muḥsin al-Hakīm¹⁹ wanted to perform the hajj pilgrimage. He asked me to contact some Saudi authorities and enquire: 'Can you permit the building of the sacred shrine in Baqī', since it has the graves of Imam al-Ḥasan, Zayn al-Ābidīn, al-Bāqir, al-Ṣādiq, and Lady Fāṭimah (peace be upon them all)?'

I contacted Sheikh Muḥammad Surūr al-Ṣabān (on this issue) (...) and he suggested that we take part in the conference organised by the League²⁰ so a discussion with Wahhabi scholars takes place. At the conference, which we attended, we were able to secure a decision to revive Islamic heritage and historical sites, such as the house of the Prophet (s), the house of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the cave of Ḥirā, the Mountain of Light.²¹

It is not known how far these noble efforts of the scholar were implemented.

17 'Shamāyil fi 'lī-yi qubūr a'immihi-i baqī' rā chih kiśī sākt?' (Persian), *Young Journalists Club*, 19 Tīr 1396 AH (solar). <http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/6159905>. Accessed 3 March 2018.

18 Lebanese philosopher and Shia religious leader who has been missing since August 1978.

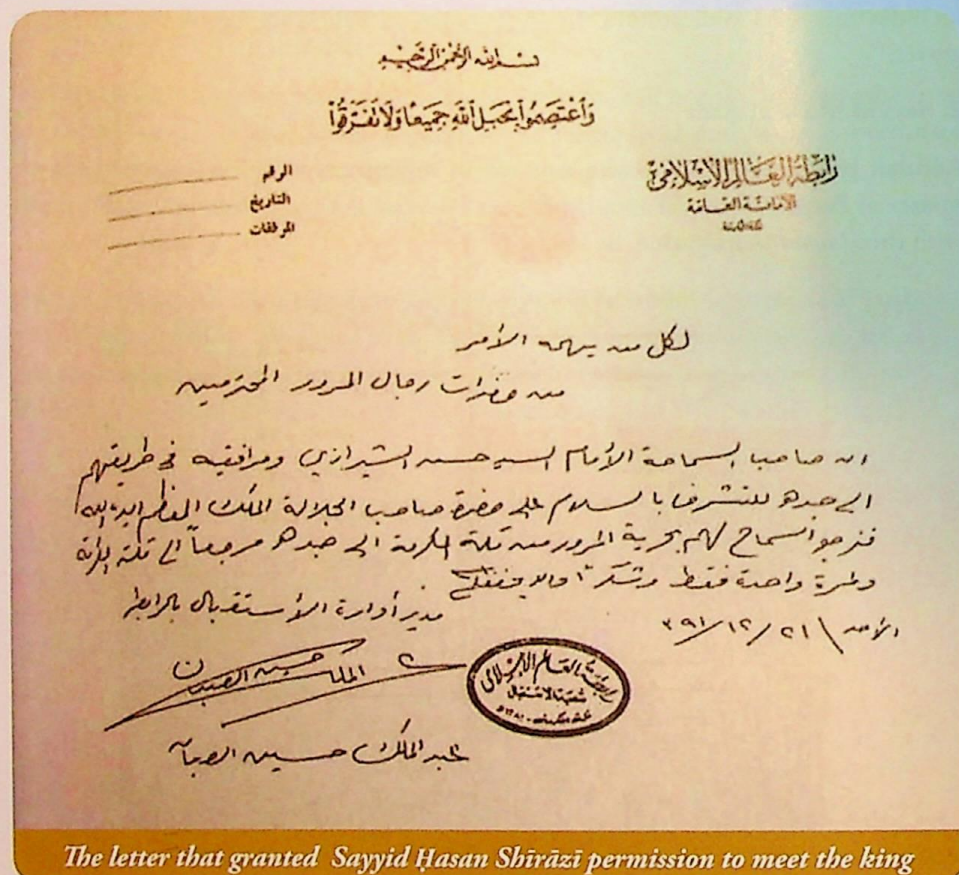
19 Ayatollah al-Hakīm was considered the highest Shia authority of his time. He died in 1970.

20 The Muslim World League was established in 1962 by Saudi clerics to disseminate the teachings of Salafism.

21 *Badr Islamic Cultural Center*, n.d. <http://www.badrice.com>. Accessed 18 December 2017.

3. Ayatollah Sayyid Ḥasan Shīrāzī

Towards the end of the 1960s, Ayatollah Ḥasan Shīrāzī²² initiated a campaign of gathering support and placing pressure on the Saudi authorities regarding Baqī'. According to some who met him, such as Ayatollah Hādī Mudarrisi²³, this issue was very important to him and he passionately sought to implement what he could.²⁴ This scholar gathered support from a number of well-known Shia jurists in Iraq, such as



22 Prominent Iraqi Shia cleric from a well-known family. He was assassinated in 1980 in Beirut.

23 Iraqi Shia Scholar, leader and activist.

24 Ḥamad Jāsīm Muḥammad, 'Dhikrī hadam aqraḥat al-baqī' (...) al-asbāb wa al-muṭālibāt,' *Imam Shirazi World Foundation*, 22 Shawwāl 1437 AH. <http://www.alshirazi.com/world/article/2016/144.htm>. Accessed 18 December 2017.

Grand Ayatollah Āl Yāsīn (ra), who occupied a leading position in the seminary of Najaf. According to Grand Ayatollah Muḥammad Shīrāzī (ra), Sayyid Ḥasan was ardent in discussing the matter of Baqī' with Saudi officials during the several hajj pilgrimages he performed. One document, signed by the head of the Muslim World League, illustrates the permission he obtained to meet King Fayṣal – the Saudi king at that time:

To whom it may concern:

His eminence Imam Sayyid Ḥasan al-Shīrāzī and his entourage will make their way to Jeddah to greet his majesty the king, may Allah support him. We would like to request that they are freely allowed to move from Mekkah towards Jeddah, and to return, for one time only.

Thank you and may Allah protect you.

'Abd al-Mālik Ḥusayn al-Ṣabān

According to Ayatollah Mudarrisī, Sayyid Ḥasan was able to present evidence and convince King Fayṣal of the need to provide the visitors with protection from the burning rays of the sun. This could be achieved through the construction of buildings next to the graves. However, the plan did not materialise, since the Pahlavi king of Iran had intervened to stop it from happening. It is suggested that the Shah wanted to perhaps take credit for himself.²⁵ Others have suggested that some influential Saudi politicians as well as some members of the Iraqi government did their utmost to ensure a complete lack of progress in rebuilding.

25 'Liḳā' ma' al-'Allāmah al-Sayyid Ḥādī al-Mudarrisī,' *Website of the Office of the Religious Authority, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ṣādiq al-Ḥusaynī al-Shīrāzī*, n.d. <http://www.alshirazi.net/leqaat/leghaat/legha/shahid/31.htm>. Accessed 3 March 2018.



CHAPTER NINE

THE BAQĪ' CEMETERY TODAY

When a visitor enters Baqī', they immediately notice that not a single grave is labelled, and most graves look similar. There are some that seem to be more important owing to the rectangular box made out of stone which surrounds them. Other graves are just heaps of sand with a rock placed on them.

The cemetery is usually opened in two-hour time slots – in the morning after *fajr* prayers and again in the afternoon following *'aṣr* prayers. At present, this privileged access is for men only. The cemetery also opens after each prayer to allow for the burial of new corpses and usually male visitors are allowed entry if they are following the body which is to be buried.

Upon entering the cemetery, a pilgrim will usually be subject to a tirade of abusive rhetoric from the notorious religious police known as the *Muṭawwa'*. Their job primarily entails prohibiting people from *ziyārah* and the paying of respect to those buried there. Large signs (mainly next to the graves of the four Imams and 'Uthmān) listing the many prohibitions stipulated by Salafi ideology when visiting the cemetery have been erected with great aplomb.

Several pilgrims have been arrested in Baqī' for reciting *ziyārah* or for engaging in debates with religious police. They are usually taken to the interrogation chambers on the ground floor, belonging to the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice. Some have been physically assaulted, whilst others have been sent to prison and charged. I have personally witnessed this on numerous occasions.

During quieter times (i.e., usually outside the hajj season), pilgrims are not allowed to stand next to the graves and are usually hurried along by the religious police. The less prominent graves are positioned at the back and, as this part is not policed as much,



An aerial view of the Baqī' Cemetery

pilgrims usually spend more time without being hurried. Taking pictures is completely banned and I have witnessed mobile phones and cameras confiscated by the Muṭawwa' due to the visitors taking photographs.

Deceased inhabitants of Medina are still buried in Baqī'. According to some who work inside the cemetery, people are buried in the same grave after six months of the other being buried there. Sometimes they even find remnants of bones within the grave. A notable feature is that most non-Shia pilgrims who visit the cemetery seem confused and unaware of the identity of those buried within Baqī'. They are often seen asking questions from those who have maps, and usually accept whatever information is given to them.

Small groups often enter, led by a guide or scholar, to secretly explain the history of the place as well as identify the prominent graves. On several occasions, passers by feel the need to stop and listen. This stems from an eagerness to receive knowledge which may be beneficial to them, even though they may not even understand the language. Such practice, however, is also dangerous and has led to arrests as well.

The area next to the graves of the four Imams is sealed by a metal gate and is inaccessible to the pilgrims. However, the graves are clearly visible from many angles. The recitation

of *ziyārah*, using books or even phones, has resulted in the confiscation of these items. This is usually less enforced in the hajj season, due to the sheer volume of pilgrims and the difficulty in reaching and policing the activities of all of them.

The Muṭawwa' normally discourage people from reciting anything, including *ziyārah*, often forcefully demanding that books or even mobile phones be closed and put away. I have had discussions with some of these individuals, who clearly lack insight or knowledge regarding the significance of Baqī'. Sadly, the fierce nature of their conduct is evident and hence they create an atmosphere of fear inside the cemetery. Some of the pilgrims are aware that by reciting *ziyārah* or even *Ṣalawāt* (to invoke blessings of Allah upon the Prophet and his family) they risk being arrested or even tortured.

For women, access to Baqī' is prohibited by the authorities at all times. However, some are able to view some of the graves inside the cemetery through adjacent roads. The visitors who stand in the area between the Mosque of the Prophet (s) and Baqī' whilst reciting the *ziyārah* also face intimidation and are usually dispersed by the religious police. Inside Baqī', one cannot but notice and feel the incredible sense of grief and sorrow the pilgrims experience. Many shed tears, whilst others who visit for the first time stand in disbelief when looking at the overall sight.



The main entrance gate into the Baqī' Cemetery



Some of the inhabitants of Medina are buried in Baqī' daily



The Muṭawwa' (religious police) are usually harsh with visitors to Baqī'

CHAPTER TEN

THE FUTURE OF BAQĪ'

Millions of people around the world would love to see the day in which the destroyed shrines of Baqī' are rebuilt once again. This aspiration has been translated into some designs and proposals, which present much hope of its implementation in the near future. One impressive project is by brother Zuhair Hussaini, found below.

THE BAQĪ' PROJECT

In September of 2015 I had the blessed opportunity to embark on a journey to design a mausoleum complex for Jannat al-Baqī'. This was completed as part of my B.A. thesis project for the final year of architecture school at the New York Institute of Technology. I spent a total of 9 months working on this proposal, 4 months of research and analysis, and 5 months of designing and execution. During these 9 months, I



formulated possible proposals for a future mausoleum at Baqī'. Although this project was completed from an academic perspective, it has no real ending. The ideas and concepts discussed are only a snippet of what could, by the will of Allah (swt), one day become reality.

THE HISTORY OF SHIA ARCHITECTURE

To plan for the future, it becomes imperative to look to the past and to take lessons from what history has taught us. This is a recurring theme in the Holy Qur'an in which God constantly speaks about the stories of previous Prophets such as Adam, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. It is essential to extract ideas and themes from history to understand what worked and what did not, especially in the world of architecture. This mentality has encouraged mankind to continuously innovate in several fields for further efficiency, especially in quality of life.

Islamic architecture is rich in variety through the influences of different empires from different regions, from the Mughals to the Persians and Ottomans. There are notable signatures left by each group of people, which are still being put into practice today with the design of mosques all over the world. There is an array of dome shapes, minaret styles, and even tile work designs. For example, one can make a clear distinction between the Sultanahmet, or Blue Mosque, in Istanbul, Turkey and the Taj Mahal in Agra, India. Not only is this visible in scale and style of design but the usage of materials, colours, and even layout. Having a range of rich design variables, presents much flexibility and opportunity when designing a mosque or any other Islamic monument.

Shia architecture can best be appreciated by the mausoleums which house the tombs of the Prophet's family in Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Lebanon. The most famous of these mausoleums are in the cities of Najaf, Karbala, Baghdad, Samarrā, and Mashhad in which the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) are buried. Each one has endured the test of time through different governments, destructions, and even natural disasters. No mausoleum has faced destruction at the hands of governments like that of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) in Karbala. Attacks range from those of the Abbasid caliphs, to the Wahhabis plundering its treasures, to suicide blasts in recent times. Thus, the mausoleum has gone through many phases of rebuilding after constant destruction.

Other recorded incidents indicate severe flooding in the mid-fourteenth century in the

Kazimayn Mosque in Baghdad. A fire destroyed the mausoleum of Imam 'Alī (a) in Najaf in 1354. It is important to note that there was much patronisation from rulers who would gift and partake in construction efforts to further expand or rebuild the mausoleums of the Ahl al-Bayt. Some did so for political gains, such as the likes of the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mūn to give him an edge over his brother Amin by reconstructing the mausoleum of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a). Whilst others did so for mere appreciation and dedication to the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (a).

Prior to the Mongol invasion, mausoleums were developed haphazardly – based on the needs of the time.¹ It was only after their invasion that a standard could be traced, such as with the porticos visible in the Kazimayn Mosque, and the mausoleums of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) and al-'Abbās (a). The one mausoleum which stands out from the rest is that of Imam al-Riḍā (a) in Mashhad, Iran. If one were to survey all the mausoleums and compare them architecturally, they would find that of Imam al-Riḍā (a) to be much greater, both in terms of size and sophistication. This is because of its situation within a country in which the government promotes Shia activity, as compared to Iraq which faces conflicts from Najaf all the way to Samarrā. For example, many decades passed before people became aware of the burial ground of Imam 'Alī (a) in Najaf, due to the animosity promoted by Umayyad propaganda. During the Ghaznavid, Seljuq, Mongol, Timurid, Safavid, Afsharid and Qajar eras, a great amount of construction took place to expand and further beautify this mausoleum.

Today, Imam al-Riḍā's mausoleum sits as one of the finest places of worship as well as being the largest mosque in the world in terms of area. Amongst the many facilities for visitors, it includes several museums, seminaries, libraries, and a cemetery. This has made the mausoleum of Imam al-Riḍā (a) a precedent in the present Baqī' design project because of its grandeur and scale. This is the one mosque that had the ability to expand and undergo much development over a great duration of time. It became a complex filled with a variety of institutions aside from being a mosque and housing a tomb.

When the Prophet's Mosque was constructed during the time of the Prophet (s), it served as not just a mosque but as a communal ground for Muslims to socialise, a place for the poor, and even for matrimonial services. These ideas should be taken into consideration when designing a mausoleum from scratch, as would be the case with Baqī'. Ideally, Baqī' should become a centre for people from all walks of life to enter.

1 *The Art and Architecture of Twelver Shi'ism: Iraq, Iran, and the Indian Sub-Continent*, p. 28–29.

This was embodied within the mannerisms and the lifestyle demonstrated by the Ahl al-Bayt (a).

A great example of this is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an in which a needy person, then an orphan, and then a captive came to the house of Imam 'Alī (s) asking for food for three days consecutively. Imam 'Alī (a), Lady Fāṭimah (a), Imam al-Ḥasan (a), and Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) had been fasting during this duration and they sacrificed their *iftār* meal (with which they would have broken their fast) for the sake of these three individuals as a trial from God (Holy Qur'an, 76:7–9). They did not inquire whether the person was Muslim or not, rather they gave the food away for the sake of God. From this story, many lessons and principles can be extracted.

Historically, the mausoleums of the Ahl al-Bayt incorporated many reputable services and institutions built by well-wishers. And this is particularly interesting because these buildings were suppressed by the governments at the time and lacked the sophistication one would see today.

- Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, the well-known traveller, visited Karbala (d.1326–27) and observed a *madrasah* (school) within the mausoleum of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a).²
- In the fourteenth century the Ilkhanid ruler Ghazan constructed a Sufi lodge (*khāniqāh*) within the mausoleum of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a).³
- Ghazan also built the Dār al-Sayyidah in Najaf, a centre for the descendants of the Prophet (s) who were usually the caretakers of the mausoleum.⁴
- In the complex of the Kaẓimayn Mosque in Baghdad, Iraq, which houses the tombs of Imam Mūsā al-Kāẓim (a) and Imam Muḥammad al-Jawad (a), a public rest house was constructed in 1097, a building to feed the poor and later an orphanage.⁵
- The mausoleum of Imam al-Riḍā (a) in Mashhad, Iran incorporated a *dār al-huffāz* (centre for Qur'anic memorisation) endorsed by Gawhar Shād, the wife of Shāh Rukh Mīrzā.⁶ 'Alī-Shir Navā'i constructed the Ghulur Khānah; a soup kitchen in which food was distributed to the poor and weak everyday.⁷

2 *The Art and Architecture of Twelver Shi'ism: Iraq, Iran and the Indian Sub-Continent*, p. 34.

3 *Ibid.* p. 134.

4 Mahir 1969, p. 134.

5 Al-Yasin 1962, p. 124–125.

6 O'Kane 1987, p. 119–120, no. 2.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 313–315, no 47.

THE FUTURE OF SHIA ARCHITECTURE

One paradigm I consistently kept in my thought process during the design phase was the need to create spaces that consisted of a continuous dialogue between the architecture and the visitor. When people visit the mausoleums housing the tombs of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) and other notable figures, the ornament design is what leaves each person in awe. Whether they look at the walls or the vaulted ceilings, the geometric nature and intricate arabesque patterns are usually responsible for the 'wow' factor. Whilst I consider this important as it has become part and parcel of Shia architecture, I think there are opportunities to explore and with which to experiment with in order to further enhance the experience. The possibilities with light and water alone can have a unique effect on a visitor, especially when there is an established poetic dialogue between these elements and the architecture. Similar experiences can be found in other religious houses of worship such as cathedrals.

1. WATER

There is no doubt about the significance of water within the essence of life. Water is the key to survival for any living creature on this earth, be it human, animal, or plant. The Holy Qur'an beautifully demonstrates this point in the following verse:

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَابَّةٍ مِّن مَّاءٍ ۖ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَمْشِي عَلَىٰ بَطْنِهِ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَمْشِي عَلَىٰ رِجْلَيْنِ
وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَمْشِي عَلَىٰ أَرْبَعٍ ۚ يَخْلُقُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤٥﴾

'Allah created every [living] creature from water. Some of them go on their bellies, some of them on two legs, and some on four. Allah creates whatever He wills. Allah has power over all things'

(Holy Qur'an 24:45)

Water is an element which represents purification. This is seen especially in the act of *wuḍūʿ*; the ablution required before prayer. But to take it a step further, within the Ja'fari school of thought the concept of *'ismah* (freedom from error) is espoused as a trait shared between the Prophets and Imams. The purity of the Ahl al-Bayt is further highlighted in the verse of *tathīr* (Holy Qur'an, 33:33).

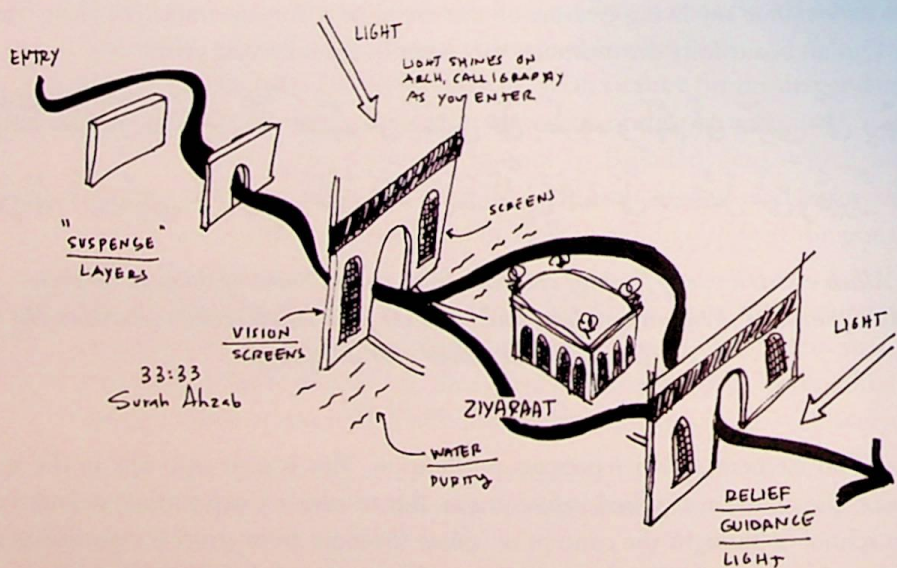
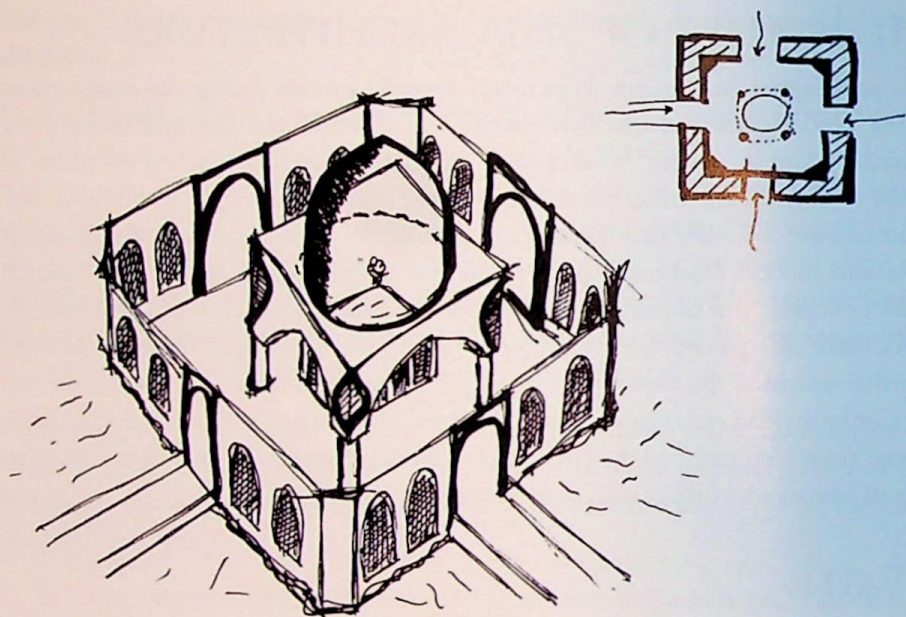


Figure 1. Sketch depicting the visitor journey coming into contact with different metaphorical elements

When visitors come to pay their respects and to send their salutations to the Imams (a), their experience should be enhanced to the highest level. I wanted to take advantage of this gesture architecturally through a symbolic approach and sought to do this by incorporating reflection pools surrounding the area of the sanctuary chamber where the *darīh* (gilded enclosure above grave) would sit. As people make their way in, they are welcomed by water and fountains which establish an instant connection of sacredness and sanctity within the space.

On a practical level the water serves as an agent to cool the visitors in the space. One must remember that the dry and arid climate of Arabia does not make it convenient for people to spend a long duration of time outdoors. The method often used to tackle this problem is the use of fans attached to walls or columns which do not necessarily make it the most efficient or aesthetically appealing feature. The breeze which can be generated from water through wind or turbines is much more refreshing to a visitor than a fan blowing in one's face. Of course, size and layout is up for discussion, especially delving into the construction on a practical level. However, the idea is not as far-fetched as one may think.

2. LIGHT

Light is synonymous with guidance and this metaphor has been used throughout the Holy Qur'an in different contexts. Allah (swt) speaks of this in the Holy Qur'an:

﴿اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَلَ لِلنَّاسِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾ (٢٥)

'Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is a niche wherein is a lamp – the lamp is in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star – lit from a blessed olive tree, neither eastern nor western, whose oil almost lights up, though fire should not touch it. Light upon light. Allah guides to His

Light whomever He wishes. Allah draws parables for mankind, and Allah has knowledge of all things.'
(Holy Qur'an 24:35)

The metaphor of light has been embodied in a variety of ways, especially in religious architecture. One can regard light as the most important factor in appreciating architecture because of the impact it has within a design. Light within a space can invoke such profound emotions in a person that they are given to walking away in astonishment. Renowned architects such as the likes of Louis Khan, Alvar Aalto, Frank Lloyd Wright and many more have used this element to their advantage to create buildings which have left a lasting impression on humanity.

When one examines Islamic architecture, particularly the mausoleums of the Ahl al-Bayt (a), there is a lack of this phenomenon of endurance. Even within the construction of the expansion projects today, there are few attempts to hone in on this. The interpretation which I sought to achieve in the Baqī' project was to introduce it as an episode after visitors paid their respects and salutations to the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt buried within. When one finishes their *ziyārah* (visitation), they strive to have a feeling of fulfilment and contentment. They pray that Allah (swt) has forgiven them and that He is pleased with them. Picture an individual with this feeling in mind walking out of the sanctuary and seeing rays from the sun hit them directly. The effect it can have on their spirit and self-esteem is tremendous. Intricate moves like this go a long way and it can cause a ripple effect towards other positive experiences in the mausoleum.

3. DESIGN ORIENTATION

One of the first observations I made about Baqī' was the direction of the walkways for people to navigate throughout the cemetery. One group of pathways were randomly connecting from one point to another, whilst others were tilted on an angle which pointed towards the qibla – the direction of Mekkah. This started the discussion about how the mausoleum would sit on the Baqī' site. Of course, it makes sense for it to align with the qibla facing the Ka'bah but in this lay an opportunity to reach even further.

I decided to create a set of rules on how the design of this mausoleum would come together in order to mesh with the existing site in a cohesive manner. This was done by creating the 'Sacred' axis and the 'Profane' axis. Any part of the mausoleum which

had a strand of divinity or sanctity associated with it, such as a prayer area or where the *darīh* would sit, would align with the sacred axis. On the other hand, every other area which did not necessarily associate with divinity would align on the profane axis. This act gave the spaces in the mausoleum hierarchal significance so that one could differentiate between the two.

Furthermore, the sacred axis became a constant reminder to the visitors about the importance of God in all affairs. No matter which part of the mausoleum one stands in, all acts of *ziyārah* are associated with the direction pointing towards the Ka'bah and, therefore, God. A criticism often made about those who visit the mausoleums of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) is that God is forgotten and the Shias pray to these figures instead. But

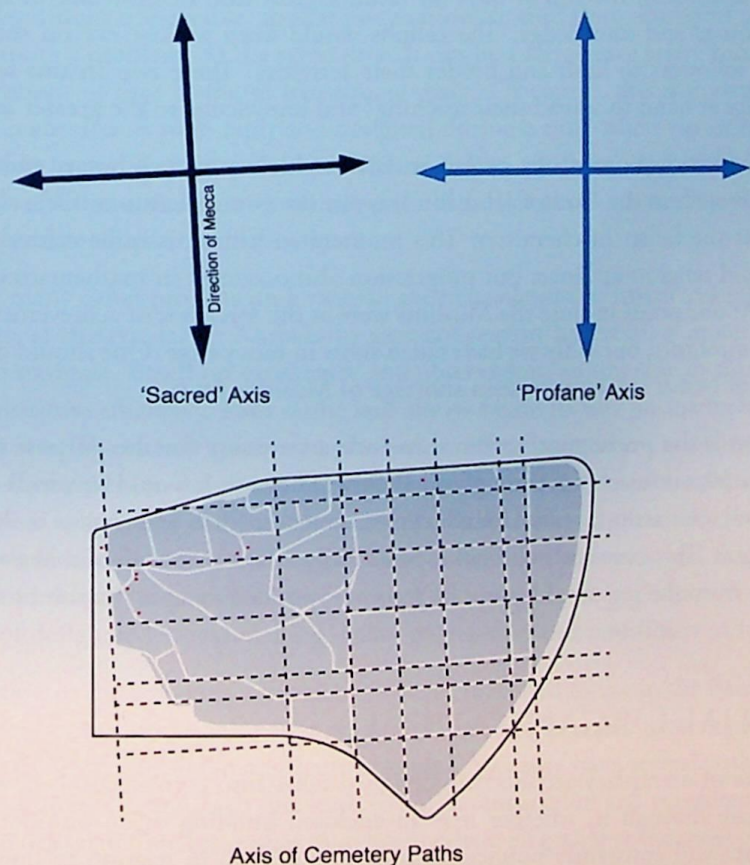


Figure 2. Diagram representing the two axes guiding the design of Baqī

this is far from the truth and, when the importance of *tawhīd* is exemplified through architecture, it can be so much more powerful.

4. THE SEMINARY

The concept of incorporating a seminary within a future mausoleum design for Jannat al-Baqī' originates from the legacies left behind by Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (a) and Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (a). During their lifetime, the transition between the Umayyad dynasty and Abbasid dynasty was in full swing, as these two groups struggled for power to rule the Islamic world. This proved to be a critical moment in Islamic history because, historically, the Ahl al-Bayt (a) faced a great deal of difficulty in spreading their teachings and knowledge. The caliphs would keep a close eye on the Imams and their followers to limit and hinder their activities. These two Imams seized the opportunity at hand to spread their teachings and knowledge to the greater *ummah*.

This resulted in a momentous period in Islamic history with scholars emerging in many fields such as the likes of Jābir ibn Ḥayyān (known in Latin as 'Geber'), who is regarded as the father of chemistry. This moment in history is quite critical because not only did religion advance, but progression also occurred in mathematics and the sciences. At one point in time the Muslims were at the forefront of achievement in the science community, but sadly we have fallen short in today's age. One should only look at the list of Nobel laureates to see a shortage of Muslims on it.

This notion is the prime motivation to include a seminary for the purpose of giving exposure to Islamic teachings through the Prophet's lineage. It would become a centre of learning and scholarship; a place for all religions to come forth and engage in discussion and dialogue. This concept manifested beautifully at the event of Mubāhalah, when Christians from the region of Najrān in Yemen responded to an invitation by the Holy Prophet (s) to visit him.

5. SPATIAL ORGANISATION

Every piece of exemplary architecture designed takes into consideration how visitors will navigate through it, whether it is an enclosed building or an outdoor garden. An architect will constantly bounce ideas back and forth in relation to how visitors will enter a space, how they will exit it and what they will experience. These sets of experiences have a profound impact on an individual as each has been calculated

through the use of various elements, such as colour, material, shape, size, and light. By having the ability to design a mausoleum from scratch for Baqī', the possibilities are endless in this category.

After having the opportunity to visit the various mausoleums throughout the Shia world in Najaf, Karbala, Mashhad, and Qum, the main problem I observed was poor and inefficient traffic control amongst visitors. This was evident in nearly every mausoleum and worsened during different periods of the day with the influx of visitors arriving for congregational prayers. On a larger scale the facilities would experience overcapacity traffic during anniversary dates for celebrations, commemorations, and other significant events. This lowers the quality of a *ziyārah* visit significantly by making conditions unbearable, so that just to move around from one point to another becomes quite a problem. At the same time, it can become a grave safety concern with a large amount of foot traffic in inadequate space. Of course, this is understandable since the mausoleums were built and designed during a time when visitor traffic was considerably lower. The mausoleum of Imam al-Riḍā (a) today has a total of twelve courtyards of various sizes, along with interior halls, but at peak times it still struggles to accommodate all visitors efficiently.

There are many other projects underway in the mausoleums of Imam 'Alī (a) in Najaf and Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) in Karbala to ease congestion by creating more space for visitors to navigate. Based on experience and observation, an upgrade in size does not always constitute efficiency. Foot traffic will always be on its way no matter what time of the day it is. The lack of systems in place and traffic management is what makes it a problem. If one were to examine a football stadium, an arena, or even a theatre, many people arrive at an event and yet exit access is usually achieved seamlessly. Foot traffic often flows in one direction within manageable hallways or rooms and this prevents any kind of mishap. In mausoleums, you often find people walking into each other due to a lack of designated spaces making it easy to step over one another.

One solution to the congestion problem, which I managed to use in the Baqī' project, was the elevation of floors and pathways in order to direct certain users depending on their destination within the mausoleum complex. You may have several paths flowing in the same direction, but each one leads to a different section and this filters out foot traffic into designated spaces, rather than having them all gather at the same place. This idea is best highlighted in the main courtyard space as it sits a story below the ground level within the mausoleum. The courtyard was sunk in order to allow foot traffic

through the mausoleum during peak times, such as congregational prayer. During such a time, you often find everything coming to a standstill as prayer is underway. However, this does not mean that everyone within the mausoleum is engaged in prayer. You find some making their way to the sanctuary space and others exiting or entering. With a simple gesture such as this, navigation throughout the mausoleum complex is easily improved.

6. REDEFINING ZIYĀRAH ARCHITECTURALLY

The hierarchy of graves within a mausoleum tends to go through disruption as one attempts to understand the significance of the figure buried. Historically, the trend has always been to build a gilded cage with ornamented silverwork above a tombstone. And, whilst this is an honourable approach for marking a grave, it can easily get saturated when the same method is used repeatedly for a combination of graves within the same area or region. This can be seen in the Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīm mausoleum in the city of Ray in Iran. Within this complex, a fifth-generation descendant of Imam al-Ḥasan (a) is buried alongside the son of Imam Zayn al-'Ābidīn (a), and brother of Imam al-Riḍā (a). All three are descendants of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) and each is worthy of having a lofty grave for visitors to pay their respects.

If one were to survey each tomb marking the graves of the Ahl al-Bayt (a), there would be no true differentiator aside from the scale and style of the gilded cage. I see this as a conflict because there is no hierarchal arrangement of this architecturally, however, a hierarchy certainly exists in belief. This notion became one of the hardest challenges I faced in designing a space which honours each figure buried in Baqī'. One should keep in mind that, aside from the four Imams of Ahl al-Bayt buried in Baqī', there is a cluster of other notable figures also buried. They include personalities which are important to both Shia and Sunni denominations.

There is no wrong or right in experimenting with different ways to express a marking of a grave spatially. With expansion projects underway in several mausoleums in the Islamic world, now is the ideal time to incorporate new ideas. The approach I took in the Baqī' design, to express the tertiary graves, was to blanket them all in a colonnade. Tall slender columns which then sprout open, forming a geometric mesh supporting the roof structure. However, above each grave, the roof is punctured to allow direct sunlight. As the light peers in, it highlights the tombstone and gives it a level of importance that separates it from the rest.

7. QUALITY OF EXPERIENCE BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN



Figure 3. Colonnade space housing other significant graves.

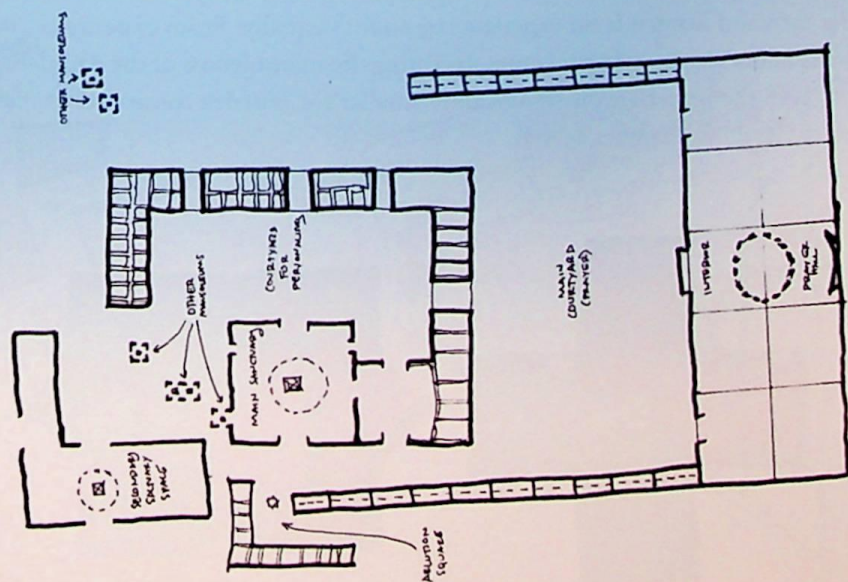


Figure 4. Early layouts for Baqi' mausoleum design.

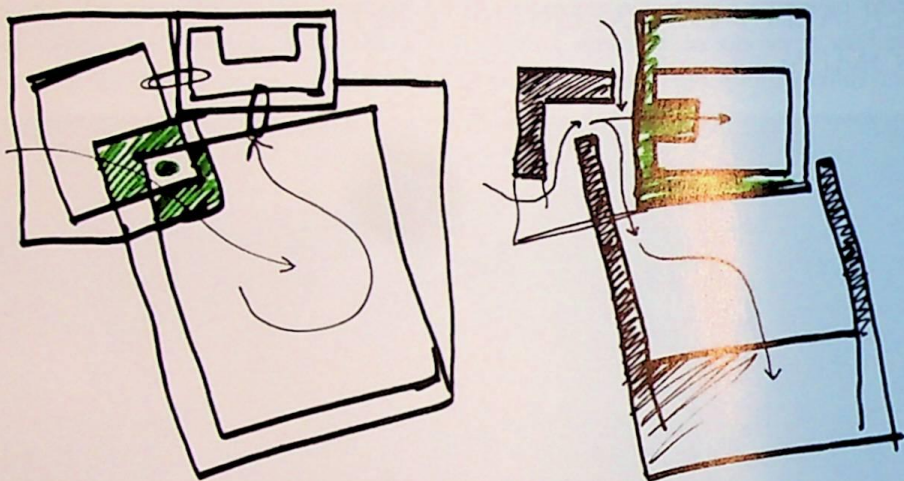


Figure 5. *Sketches experimenting with design of main sanctuary space in conjunction to the rest of the mausoleum.*

There are rules which govern interaction between men and women in Islam, especially within a holy space such as a mausoleum. However, this should not become a reason to hinder men and women from experiencing *ziyārah* equally. From experience, women are set at a disadvantage when it comes to visiting the mausoleums of the Ahl al-Bayt (a). Often, even the prayer area is significantly smaller for females compared to males, or access to the tomb chamber as well.

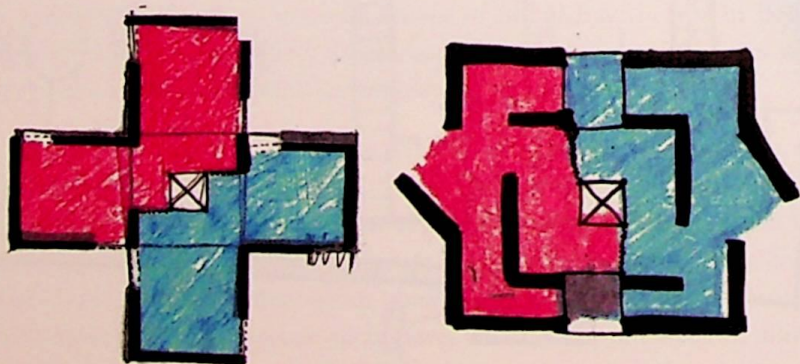


Figure 6. *Two schemes depicting gender interaction within sanctuary space.*

The two events which are most sensitive concerning gender interactions are congregational prayer, and the visitation of the *darīh* (gilded cage enclosure over tomb) area. Aside from these two acts, which require a partition separating males from females, there is flexibility. One initiative I sought to implement in the Baqī' project was to give both genders an equal experience from the moment they entered the mausoleum to the second they exited. I experimented with different layouts to create a space which would allow both males and females to visit a tomb, whilst maintaining Islamic guidelines on gender interaction.

THE FUTURE OF BAQĪ'

To this day Jannat al-Baqī' remains a cemetery without any projects in sight for a mausoleum to be constructed in the future. Of course, the present proposal is nowhere near the vision upheld by the current Saudi government, especially since the original mausoleums were razed by an ideology sponsored by the Saudi government. However, this does not stop one from having a vision of what the Baqī' of tomorrow will look like.

In my opinion there are endless opportunities in determining how a future Baqī' should look. It is open to interpretation and this difference in design is healthy because

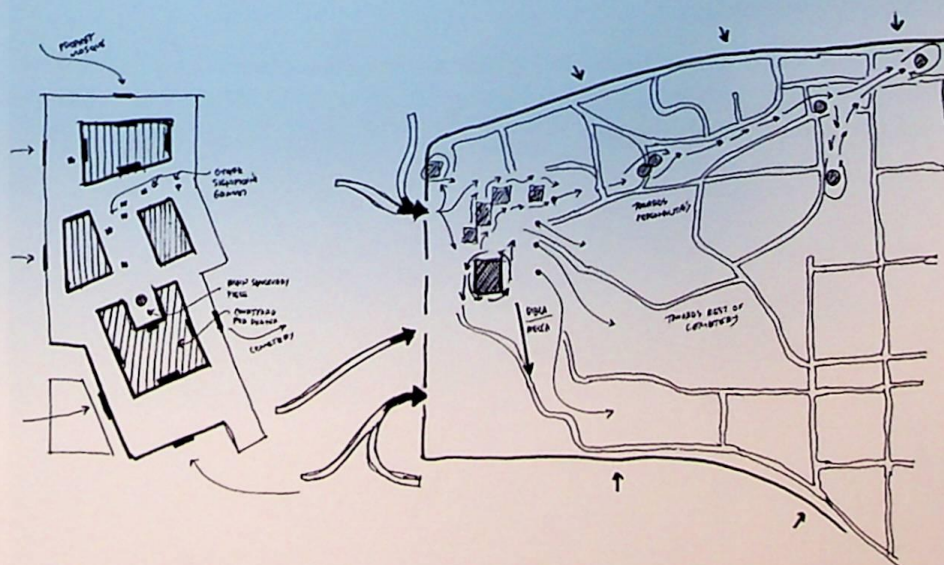


Figure 7. Two schemes depicting gender interaction within sanctuary space.

it encourages creativity and innovation. Shia architecture can certainly use a breath of fresh air, and Baqī' presents a unique opportunity for this to happen. However, it is vital to establish this vision and to sustain it in every way possible. It only empowers and emboldens the community to pave a path forward for this project. Once a vision is in place, reality will appear much closer than we think.



Figure 8. Bird's eye view rendering of Baqī' design proposal.



Figure 9. Rendered view of Baqī' design proposal from Masjid an-Nabawi

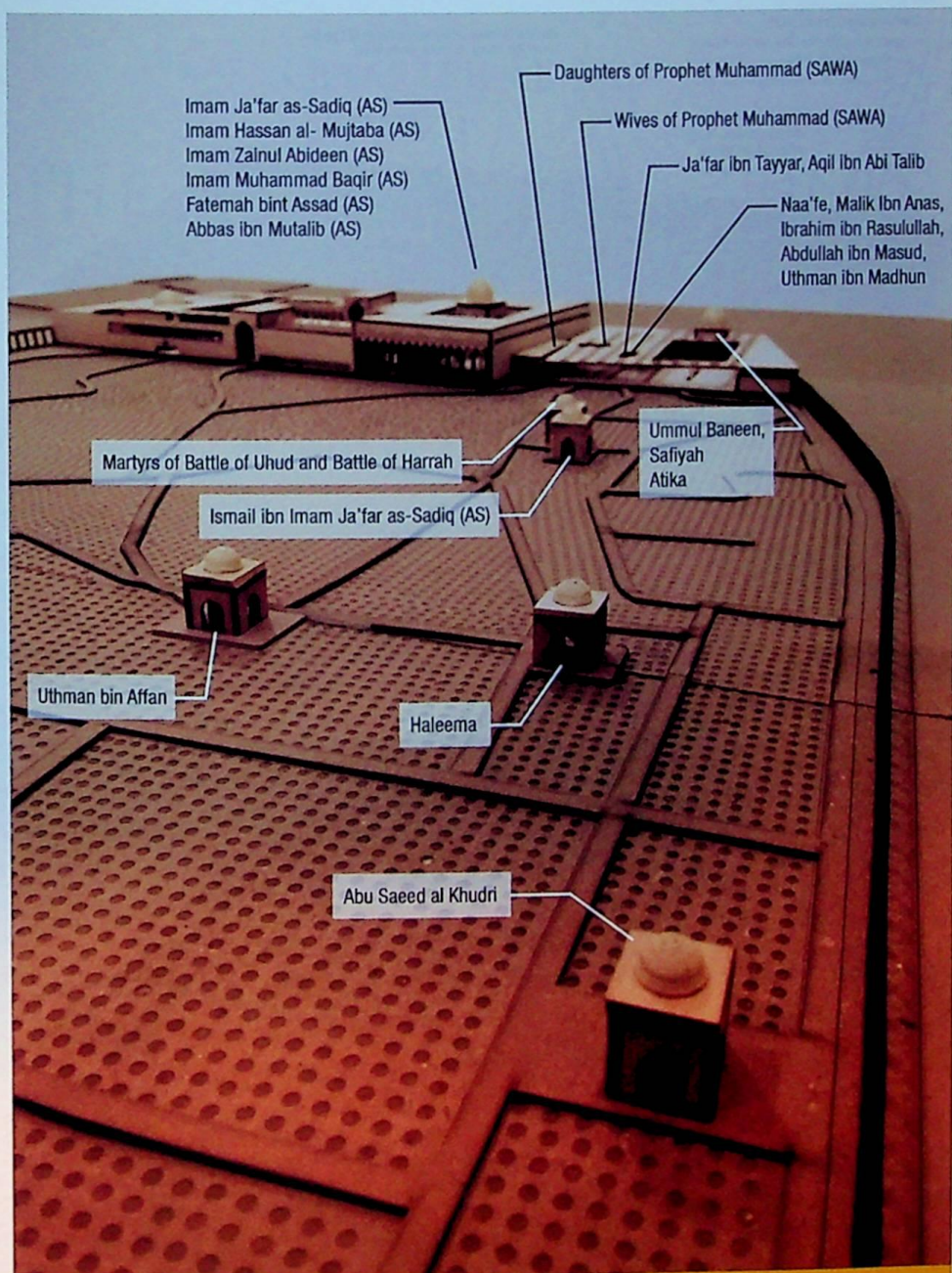


Figure 10. Wooden model of the Baqi' design proposal with labels of graves.

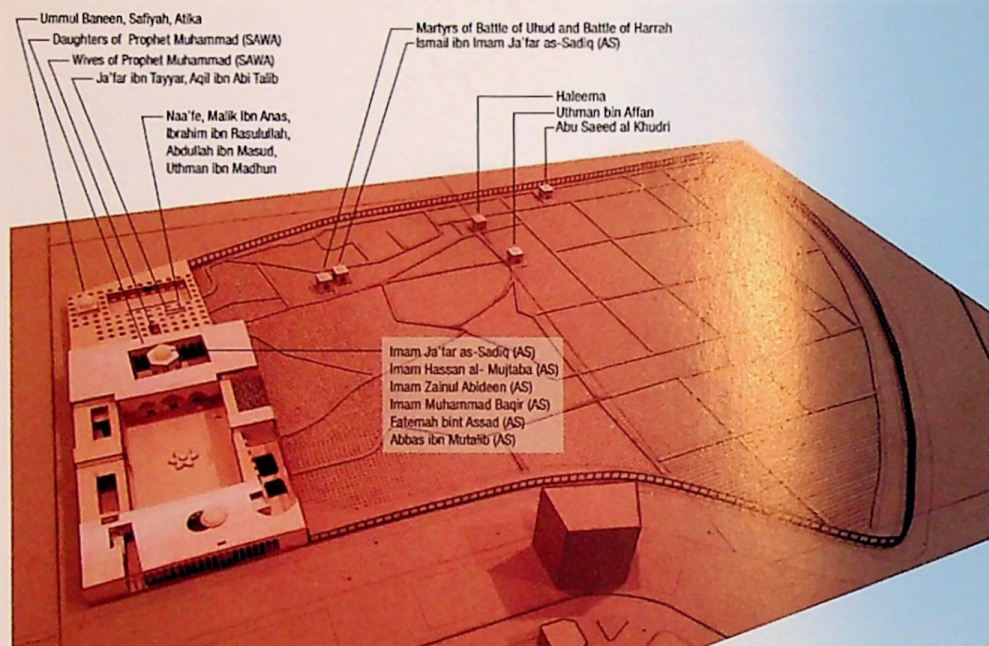


Figure 11. *Wooden model of the Baqi' design proposal with labels of graves*



Figure 12. *Side elevation of Baqi' design proposal*

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE BUILDING OF SHRINES IN ISLAM

For centuries, Muslims around the world have shown their respect to revered personalities in history by building shrines and mausoleums, thereby encouraging visitation in their remembrance. This continued until the emergence of the school of Aḥmad ibn Taymiyyah,¹ who sought to reform this practice and wrote vehemently against the building of shrines. His ideas were rejected by Muslim scholars for centuries, but were later picked up and implemented by Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb in Hijaz.

Many of the historically important and revered sites that reminded the Muslims of the Prophetic era and beyond were destroyed. Estimates suggest that over 90% of Islamic heritage sites have been tragically erased in Mekkah and Medina.² Saudi muftis and councils responsible for publishing rulings have issued many edicts throughout the years, clearly prohibiting the construction of shrines in places of worship and where graves are found. The main objection is that Allah (swt) should not be worshipped where there are graves, and that domes over graves should be levelled. These things are presented as a pretext for polytheism. Examples of such edicts are as follows.

1. On the main website that publishes edicts of Salafi scholars in Saudi Arabia, named the 'Portal of the General Presidency of Scholarly Research and Ifta'³ on building of tombs, the following answer is given:

1 A theologian who died in 1328, Ibn Taymiyyah is widely known as Sheikh al-Islam. An author of many books, Ibn Taymiyyah was a strong advocate of the Ḥanbalī school. He was imprisoned on several occasions due to his views, and was widely attacked by many Muslim scholars for his unorthodox opinions.

2 Irfan Al Alawi, 'The Destruction of the Holy Sites in Mekkah and Medina'

3 The web address of this organisation is <http://www.alifta.com>.

Q: (...) Is it permissible to use stones and cement or bricks and cement in building the grave?

A: (...) As for building and plastering the tomb, this is **not** permissible (...) In addition, plastering of graves and building over them **lead to** revering them and supplicating them without Allah as happen by many people to many graves which were glorified and then domes and Masjids (mosques) **were** built over them so they take them as Lords besides Allah supplicating and **calling** them for help, seeking blessings in them, and asking them for provisions. Such acts done by many people by the grave of Al-Hussain, the grave of Al-Badawiy, and other graves (...) Therefore, it is obligatory upon all Muslim governments and people to fear Allah and warn against excessiveness related to the graves **including** building over them and using them as Masjids (...) They should beware of the bad consequence of that for it leads to excessive reverence of the dead, supplicating to them, and asking them for help and provisions, which is a form of the major *Shirk* (ascribing partners to Allah in worship) that was done by the disbelievers of Quraysh and other Arab and non-Arab tribes.⁴

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Portal of the General Presidency
of Scholarly Research and Ifta'

English Français Español Indonesia Türkçe العربية

Home Page Previous Page Line Map Search

Fatwas of Ibn Baz
Content > Volume 9 > Demolishing graves to dig and reconstruct them

(Part No. 9; Page No. 445)

Demolishing graves to dig and reconstruct them

Q: When a grave collapses and we want to dig and rebuild it but there are bones inside it, what should we do with them? Is it permissible to use stones and cement or bricks and cement in building the grave?

A: If a grave falls down, its dust should be returned to it and be leveled like other graves so that it is not violated. As for building and plastering the tomb, this is not permissible. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said in the Hadith narrated by Jaber bin 'Abdullah Al-Ansari (may Allah be pleased with them) who said, 'the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) forbade plastering of graves, sitting on them, and building over them.' (Related by Muslim in his Sahih) In addition, plastering of graves and building over them lead to revering them and supplicating them without Allah as happen by many people to many graves which were glorified and then domes and Masjids (mosques) were built over them so they take them as Lords besides Allah supplicating and calling them for help, seeking blessings in them, and asking them for provisions. Such acts done by many people by the grave of Al-Hussain, the grave of Al-Badawiy, and other graves. It is reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'May Allah curse the Jews and the Christians; they used the graves of their Prophet as Masjids.' (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim) Moreover, it is narrated in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of Um Salamah and Um Habbabah (may Allah be pleased with them) that they told the Prophet (peace be upon him) that they saw a church in Abyssinia (Ethiopia) that contained pictures, he (peace be upon him) said, 'When a pious person among these people died, they built a place of worship on their grave and then decorated it with such pictures. They will be the worst of creatures in the sight of Allah (Exalted be He)'. It is related in Sahih of Muslim on the authority of Jundub bin 'Abdullah.

(Part No. 9; Page No. 445)

Al-Bajaly (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'I stand free of blame before Allah for having taken any one of you as a friend, for Allah has taken me as His friend, as He took Ibrahim as His friend. Were I to have taken any one of my Ummah (community) as a friend, I would have taken Abu Bakr: Truly, those who preceded you used to take the graves of their prophets and righteous men as places of worship, but you must not take graves as mosques; I forbid you to do that. There are many hadiths to the same effect.

Therefore, it is obligatory upon all Muslim governments and people to fear Allah and warn against excessiveness related to the graves including building over them and using them as Masjids. This is out of obedience to the Prophet (peace be upon him). They should beware of the bad consequence of that for it leads to excessive reverence of the dead, supplicating to them, and asking them for help and provisions, which is a form of the major *Shirk* (ascribing partners to Allah in worship) that was done by the disbelievers of Quraysh and other Arab and non-Arab tribes. Allah removed it from this peninsula by the aid of the Da'wah (call) and struggle of the Prophet (peace be upon him), his Sahabah (Companions), and those who followed them rightfully from the Imams of guidance and callers to Tawhid (Oneness to Allah). May Allah admit us to them! He is the One Who brings success.

Q & A from the 'Portal of the General Presidency of Scholarly Research and Ifta'

4 'Demolishing graves to dig and reconstruct them,' *Fatwas of Ibn Baz*, vol.

9, part no. 9, p. 445-6., n.d. <http://www.alifta.com/Fatawa/FatawaChapters.aspx?language=en&View=Page&PageID=1364&PageNo=1&BookID=14>. Accessed 3 March

2018.

2. Various questions presented to the Permanent Committee pertain to the same principles.

Q: There is a shrine of a pious person in our country. Every year, people; men and women, go to this grave and stay by it reciting extolments and Adhkar (invocations) for three days and doing other common things of these celebrities, and we do so along with them. What is the ruling on this regard?

A: This act is not permissible and it is counted as Bid'ah (innovations in religion). Therefore, it is not legally permitted to build over graves, whether this building is called a shrine, a tomb, a Masjid (mosque), or any other name. The graves at the time of the Prophet (s) (peace be upon him) and the era of his Companions that were in Al-Baqi' and other places remained exposed without any building over them. It turns out that building on graves, plastering, adorning and covering them are detestable and not permissible, as they lead to *Shirk* (ascribing partners to Allah in worship). Building domes and Masjids or hanging curtains over them are also not allowed. Moreover, visiting graves in the way the questioner mentioned which includes sitting by them, chanting extolments, eating food, wiping oneself with the grave dust seeking blessings, supplicating, and offering Salah (Prayer) by them are Bid'ahs and not permissible.⁵

Q: The people of our town demolished a Masjid (mosque) to rebuild it. The Masjid has been built on a shrine. When they started building, they built the shrine and didn't exclude it from the Masjid. Is it permissible to donate money to this Masjid? Moreover, is it permissible to perform Salah (Prayer) there bearing in mind that the grave is in a room whose door opens from inside the Masjid?

A: In case that the situation is as mentioned above, it is not permissible either to donate money for building this Masjid or even to help in its construction by any means. Performing Salah in such a Masjid is not permissible. Rather, that Masjid should be destroyed.⁶

5 'Ruling on staying by the grave reciting extolments and Adhkar for three days,' *Fatwas of Ibn Baz*, vol. 13, part no. 13, p. 319-22., n.d. <http://www.alifta.com/Fatawa/FatawaChapters.aspx?language=en&View=Page&PageID=2422&PageNo=1&BookID=14>. Accessed 3 March 2018.

6 *Fatwas of the Permanent Committee*, vol. 1, p. 412, fatwa no. 5093. <http://www.alifta.com/Fatawa/FatawaChapters.aspx?language=en&View=Page&PageID=215&PageNo=1&BookID=7>. Accessed 3 March 2018.

THE LEGITIMACY OF BUILDING SHRINES IN ISLAM

The following are brief deductions from the Qur'an, as well as the *Sunnah*, that point to the legitimacy of building shrines and mosques next to graves and tombs.

1. THE YOUTH OF THE CAVE

In chapter 18 of the Holy Qur'an, the story of a group of *believers* who fled their people in search for a place to worship the Almighty (swt) is *detailed*. After finding a cave, Allah (swt) made them go through a deep sleep for over *300 years*. Upon waking up and being discovered, they died. The people of the town *debated* what they should do with their bodies:

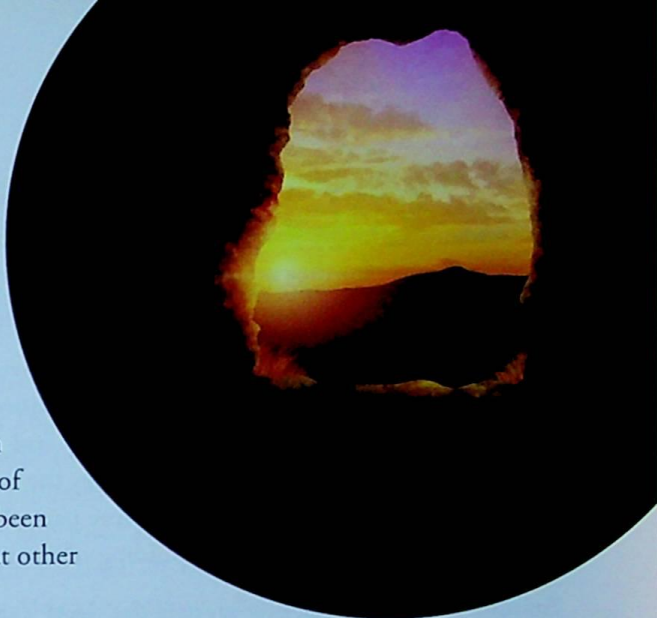
وَكَذَلِكَ أَتَتْهُمْ أَلْفٌ مِنْهُمْ لِيَعْلَمُوا أَن وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا إِذْ يَتَنَزَّعُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَمْرَهُمْ فَقَالُوا ابْنُوا عَلَيْهِم بُنْيَانًا رَبُّهُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ قَالَ الَّذِينَ غَلَبُوا عَلَىٰ أَمْرِهِمْ لَنَتَّخِذَ عَلَيْهِمْ مَسْجِدًا

So it was that We let them come upon them, that they might know that Allah's promise is true, and that there is no doubt in the Hour. As they disputed amongst themselves about their matter, they said, 'Build a building over them. Their Lord knows them best.' Those who had the say in their matter said, 'We will set up a place of worship over them'

(Holy Qur'an, 18:21)

The upshot of this was that a mosque was built exactly where they were buried. The fact that the Qur'an acknowledges this and does not condemn it is strong evidence for the legitimacy of building shrines and worshipping Allah (swt) next to graves. The youth of the cave were believers and their community wanted to preserve their remembrance, hence a mosque was erected at that place. Undoubtedly the position of the Prophets and Imams is higher than the youth of the cave, and hence the construction of shrines at their resting place would be highly endorsed.

The exact location of the burial site of the youth of the cave is disputed, and sites in Turkey, Jordan, and Syria have been affiliated with people of the cave. A few years ago, I personally visited one site in Amman, Jordan, and witnessed a mosque right on top of the cave where the bodies of the youth were believed to have been buried. Visitors have confirmed that other locations exist as well.



2. THE HOUSES OF LIGHT

Chapter 24 of the Holy Qur'an is named after verse 35, in which the Almighty (swt) describes Himself as the 'Illuminating Light of the Heavens and Earth'. The next verse points mankind to where this Light is found:

فِي بُيُوتٍ أَذِنَ اللَّهُ أَنْ تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيهَا أَسْمُهُ، يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ
وَالْآصَالِ ۖ

'In houses Allah (swt) has allowed to be raised and wherein His Name is celebrated; He is glorified therein, morning and evening'
(Holy Qur'an, 24:36).

The verse uses the word in Arabic which denotes a construction (buyūt). In addition, traditions from Sunni and Shia sources point to the reality of these houses. For example, 'Allāmah al-Suyūfī narrates:

Anas ibn Mālik said: 'The Holy Prophet (s) recited this verse. At that time a person stood up and said: "To which house does this refer?"'

The Holy Prophet (s) said: 'The house of the Prophets.'

Abū Bakr stood and said 'Is this house (referring to the house of 'Alī and Fāṭimah) included amongst them?'

The Holy Prophet (s) replied: 'Yes, it is the most important of all of them.'⁷

This narration strongly points to the importance of the places associated with the Ahl al-Bayt (a), and that they are areas for seeking spirituality and purity of the soul. This is because the Almighty (swt) describes them as places whereby His Light is attained.

The verse also clearly indicates the permission given by the Almighty for these houses to be raised, or in other words, built. In addition, the shrines and mausoleums of the Holy Prophets and Imams encourage and increase the remembrance of the Almighty (swt) in many ways. This includes the recitation of the Qur'an, prayers and supplication, as well as *dhikr*. It is therefore part of the ethos of this holy verse, and fits within the encouragement of the building of mausoleums.

Another note is that the Qur'an uses the word 'raise', which can either mean physical construction or spiritual progression. The word is used in chapter 2, verse 127:

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

*'As Abraham raised the foundations of the House with Ishmael [they prayed]:
"Our Lord, accept it from us! Indeed, You are the All-hearing, the All-knowing."'*
(Holy Qur'an, 2:127)

Here the description is concerning the physical building of the Holy Ka'bah, therefore a similar usage in chapter 24 is understood as well.

Even if the meaning is spiritual progression, it alludes to the respect and honour that must be shown to their houses and the places associated with these blessed individuals. Destroying their mausoleums and shrines is clearly a disrespectful act that dishonours this illustrious family, and is in clear opposition of the command of the Almighty to venerate the places of the Prophets and the Ahl al-Bayt (a).

3. HONOURING THE AHL AL-BAYT

The Holy Qur'an commands that respect and love is displayed towards the family of the Prophet (s):

7 Al-Durr al-Manthūr, vol. 5, p. 50.

قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ

'Say I do not ask you for any reward except for love towards my family'

(Holy Qur'an 42:23)

One of the practical demonstrations of this loyalty is to honour their resting places and encourage their remembrance. Indeed, they are considered as holy personalities whose lives were sacrificed for the sake of Allah (swt). By building their shrines, their legacy is upheld and their examples followed and studied. This is the practice of people throughout Islamic history. Hence one finds shrines for revered personalities in the Sunni world, such as 'Abd al-Qādir al-Gilani in Baghdad, Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī in Turkey, and many shrines in North Africa for various Muslim saints.

4. THE STATION OF IBRĀHĪM (A)

Allah (swt) notes the importance of the station of Ibrāhīm (a), known as Maqām Ibrāhīm, in the Holy Qur'an:

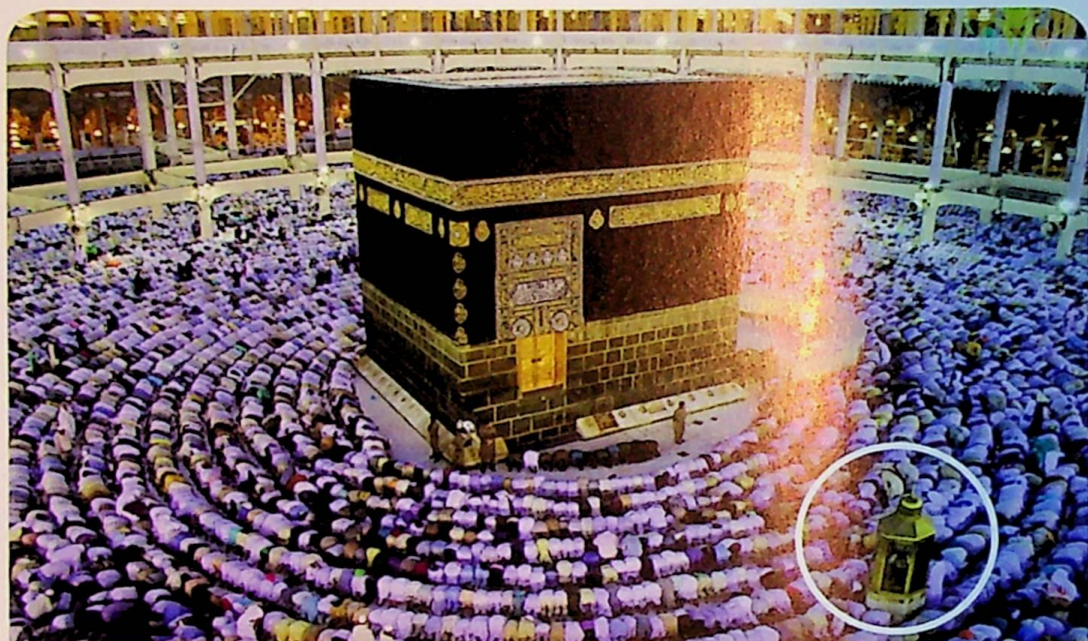
وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا وَاتَّخِذُوا مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَهِيمَ مُصَلًّٰى

'(...) and take the station of Ibrāhīm as a place for prayer'

(Holy Qur'an, 2:125)

This place is where Prophet Ibrāhīm (a) stood to build the Holy Ka'bah. The footprints of this Prophet are still found inside the Maqām today. We can therefore deduce that, since the footprints of a Prophet (s) are deemed sacred in addition to being a place of worship, the bodies of God's emissaries and vicegerents should also be respected and honoured.

The Almighty (swt) commands the prayers for the circumambulation (*tawāḥḥ*) to be performed behind this place. This denotes respect and importance for the station of Ibrāhīm (a). Notably, the worship of God is discussed in conjunction with a place that has connection to a Prophet of God. This association is significant, since Wahhabi scholars often put forward the argument that worship of God cannot take place in proximity to graves.



Maqām Ibrāhīm (circled) in the Sacred Mosque in Makkah

5. THE BLESSINGS FROM GOD

The Qur'an further tells us that the Prophets have blessings (known as *barakah*) wherever they go:

وَجَعَلَنِي مُبَارَكًا أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُ

'He has made me blessed, wherever I may be (...)'

(Holy Qur'an, 19:31)

This verse describes Prophet 'Isā (a) and is undoubtedly applicable to all Prophets as well as the glorious Ahl al-Bayt (a). The blessings are also considered applicable even after death, since the verse does not specify its existence only during life. Importantly, the verse states that, wherever the Prophets go, the blessings follow them, indicating the inherent sacredness of the burial place of these noble individuals.

6. THE SACRED VALLEY

In the story of Prophet Mūsā (a), Allah (swt) informs us that there was divine

communication at a sacred land called Ṭuwwā:

إِنِّي أَنَا رَبُّكَ فَاخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ إِنَّكَ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى

'Indeed I am your Lord! So take off your sandals. You are indeed in the sacred valley of Ṭuwwā'

(Holy Qur'an, 20:12)

This was not a mosque or necessarily a place of worship, but rather an area that the Almighty (swt) chose to speak with Prophet Mūsā. Therefore, any association with the Almighty (swt) brings about the sacredness which is designated by Him. Similarly, this applies to lands such as Arafat, Mina, and even Ṣafā and Marwah. Sacred places serve as a reminder of the Majesty of Allah (swt) and inspire people to seek nearness to Him. They should be honoured, not desecrated.

7. THE GRAVE OF THE PROPHET (S)

The very fact that the grave of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (s) is situated within the mosque, together with the graves of Abū Bakr and 'Umar adjacent, clearly demonstrates

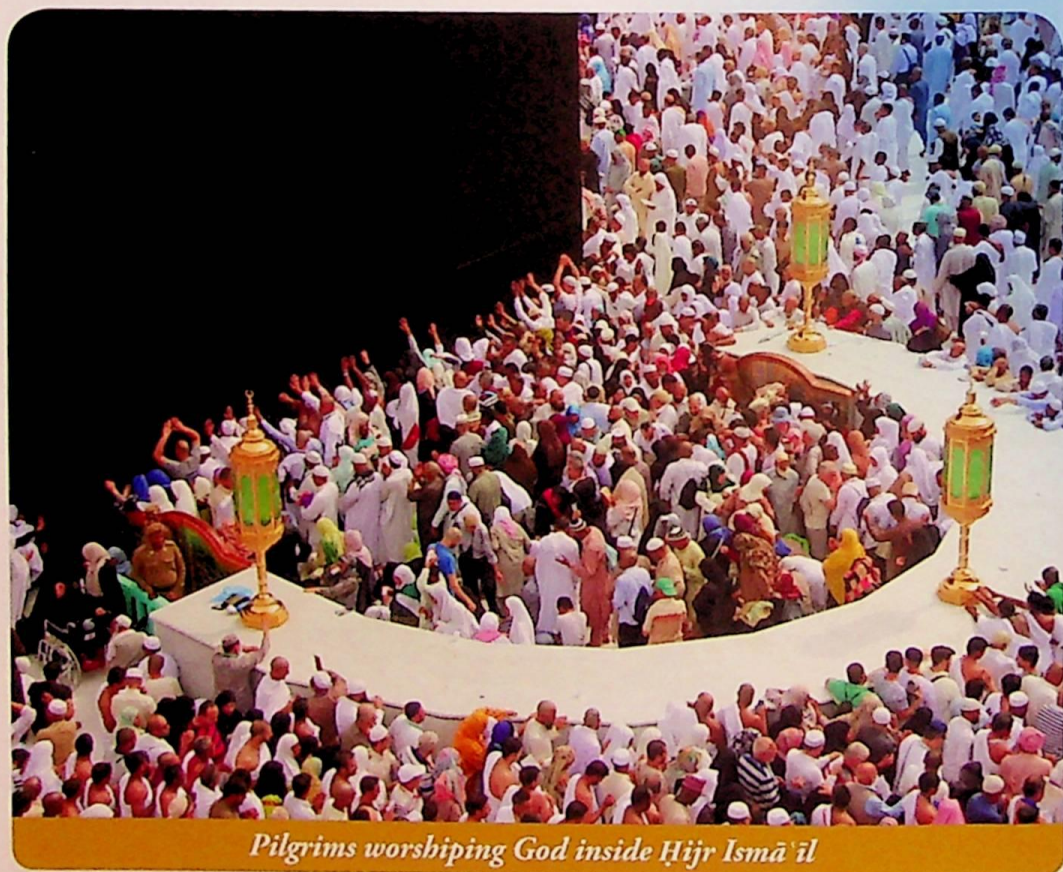


The chamber of the burial site of Prophet Muḥammad (s)

that places of worship can actually have tombs within them. The fact that the grave of the Prophet (s) and some of his companions remained within the mosque and in proximity to where people prayed for over fourteen centuries, demonstrates the legality of such practice. If this was wrong, Muslims over many hundreds of years would have objected and worked to separate the graves from the mosque.

Prayers are performed right next to the resting place of the Prophet (s) and, since its inception the grave was built, protected, and kept inside a chamber. Despite being a building, there were no objections by Muslims. The same can be said of the caliphs Abū Bakr and 'Umar, who did not object to being buried inside the chamber. The first to object was Ibn Taymiyyah, and this was soon applied by Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb.

8. GRAVES AROUND THE HOLY KA'BAH



Pilgrims worshiping God inside Ḥijr Ismā'il

Many narrations point to the graves of Prophets around the Ka'bah and in other mosques. For example, traditions point to the grave of Prophet Ismā'il (a) being in the semi-circle next to the Ka'bah, known as Ḥijr Ismā'il.⁸ Similarly, narrations point to ninety-nine Prophets being buried in the area between the black stone and the Maqām of Ibrāhīm (a).⁹

At the same time, the Prophet Muḥammad (s) is narrated to have said that seventy Prophets are buried in Masjid al-Khif (in Mina, just outside Mekkah).¹⁰ This further suggests how these places of worship, visited by millions of Muslims on an annual basis, contain graves and yet pilgrims perform prayers exactly at these places. If having shrines or performing prayers next to graves is forbidden, then the performance of ṣalāh in Ḥijr Ismā'il and Masjid al-Khif should be forbidden as well. Clearly, prayers in these places are not forbidden; rather they are permissible and recommended.

9. THE SIGNS OF ALLAH (SWT)

The Qur'an directs mankind to venerate and honour the signs that lead people to Allah (swt). These are known as 'sha'ā'ir':

ذَٰلِكَ وَمَنْ يُعِظِمِ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ ۝٣٢

'That is, whoever honours the signs of Allah – indeed this is from God-consciousness of the heart'

Holy Quran (22:32)

Preserving and protecting the shrines, which house the bodies of the vicegerents of God and those chosen by Him, are undoubtedly ways of honouring the signs of the Almighty (swt). The direct connection in this verse with piety and awareness of God highlights the strong recommendation and the strength of such practice, in that it draws humans towards their Lord and creates a spiritual environment conducive to worship of the Almighty (swt) alone.

⁸ *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 3, p. 103. *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, vol. 11, p. 490. *Tafsīr al-Ālūsī*, vol. 9, p. 8.

⁹ *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, vol. 2, p. 13.

¹⁰ *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, vol. 12, p. 316. *Al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaghīr*, vol. 2, p. 229.

10. MONOTHEISM

A perfunctory glance at shrines in different parts of the world clearly exposes the fact that only Allah (swt) is worshipped in these places and no other, as opposed to the claims by some that polytheism (*shirk*) takes place in these places. The authenticated practice of intercession, as well as devotion in the form of prayers and Qur'an recitation generates a great sense of spirituality and dedication towards the Creator in these sanctuaries. Many of these shrines, such as the ones in Iraq and Iran, contain various departments and noble centres, such as for housing and healthcare, as well as education. In addition, dedicated publishing of the Qur'an, as well as thousands of books propagating the faith, adds to their intrinsic importance.

11. THE MANY SHRINES AROUND THE ISLAMIC WORLD

The existence of mausoleums and tombs for saints is not confined to Shia areas, but rather shrines visited by millions are found throughout the Muslim world. The shrine of Abū Ḥanīfah in Baghdad, the mausoleum of Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī in Turkey, the shrine of Lady Zaynab and the head of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) in Egypt, as well as the resting place of Prophet Ibrāhīm (a) in Hebron, Palestine are some examples. This highlights the general acceptance of building shrines throughout history and across the Muslim lands.

The shrines have been preserved and well looked after for centuries. Today, they are visited by thousands of devotees from around the world, expressing their love and reverence towards the personalities buried within these shrines.

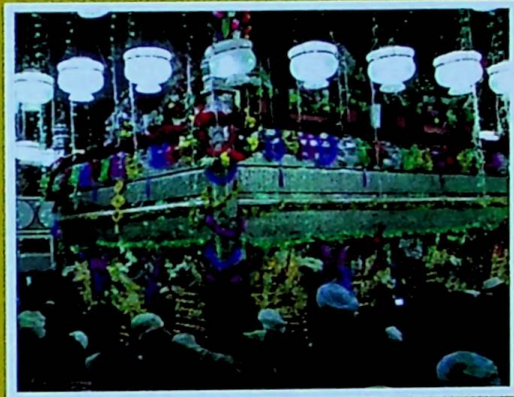
The object of worship in these sites is only the Almighty Allah (swt) and no other is associated with Him. Muslims in these sites pray to God with the intercession of the blessed individuals buried therein.

12. THE STRONG WARNING IN THE QUR'AN

Allah (swt) strongly condemns those who prohibit others from constructing places of worship of the Almighty (swt) and continuously seek to destroy them. The Qur'an promises humiliation in this world and chastisement in the hereafter:



*The Mausoleum of Abū Ḥanīfah
in Baghdad, Iraq*



*The site of the head of Imam
al-Ḥusayn in Cairo, Egypt*



*The shrine of Imam Bukhari
in Samarkand, Uzbekistan*



*The shrine of Lady Zaynab
in Cairo, Egypt*



*The tomb of Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī
in Istanbul, Turkey*



*The resting place of 'Abd al-Qādir
al-Gilānī in Baghdad, Iraq*

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن مَّنَعَ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَسَعَىٰ فِي خَرَابِهَا
 أُولَٰئِكَ مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا خَائِفِينَ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا
 خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١١٤﴾

'Who is a greater wrongdoer than him who denies access to the mosques of Allah (swt) lest His Name be celebrated therein, and tries to ruin them? Such people may not enter them, except in fear. There is disgrace for them in this world, and there is for them a great punishment in the hereafter.'

(Holy Qur'an, 2:114)

This verse also highlights the importance of preserving the shrines and places of worship of God, and that their destruction is condemned in Islamic teachings.

WHY DID THE PROPHET (S) NOT BUILD SHRINES?

Some may pose the question that, if justification for building shrines is found in the Islamic shariah, why did the Prophet (s) not build any tombs or shrines himself? Firstly, the actions of the Prophet (s) in ensuring the identification of the graves of his son Ibrāhīm and that of 'Uthmān ibn Maz'ūn by commanding distinguishable rocks to be placed on them, as well as his continuous visitation of Baqī', are indicative of his emphasis on visiting and maintaining graves of revered personalities. Similarly, his daughter Lady Fāṭimah (a) regularly visited the grave of Ḥamzah, and worked to repair any damage.¹¹

Secondly, an objective consideration of the economic difficulties faced by Muslims reveals how such a construction was very difficult at that time. For example, narrations tell us of how the Prophet (s) was without food for three days during the Battle of Aḥzāb, or how Muslims would share one date between a few men during the expedition of Tabūk.

¹¹ *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 3, p. 19.

AN IMPORTANT NARRATION

Through a chain of narrators, Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan has recounted from Abū Amīr, the advisor of Hijaz, who asked Imam al-Ṣādiq (a):

What is the reward of the visitation of the grave of Imam 'Alī and renovation of his resting place?

Imam replied, 'Oh Abū Amīr, my father informed me, from his father, from al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī, from 'Alī (a) that the Prophet (s) said to him: "By Allah (swt), you will be killed and buried in the land of Iraq."'

Imam 'Alī then asked: 'Messenger of Allah, what is the reward of those who visit our graves and build them, making a continuous effort to visit?'

The Prophet (s) said: 'Abū al-Ḥasan, Allah (swt) has made the hearts of the best of His creation and the choicest of his servants yearn towards you, seeking to remove any humiliation and harm from you. They will build your shrines and increasingly perform visitation to it, seeking proximity to Allah (swt), and closeness to his Messenger. These are, O 'Alī, the ones selected for my intercession, who will arrive at my pond, and visit me on that day in Paradise.

O 'Alī, whomsoever builds your graves and keeps on doing so will get the reward of assisting Sulaymān ibn Dāwūd in the construction of the Sacred House (Bayt al-Maqdis). Whomsoever visits your graves will be given the reward of seventy hajj after the obligatory pilgrimage. They will emerge (after the visitation) sinless, just like the day they were born. Therefore, to you and those who love you are glad tidings of blessings and happiness that the eyes have not observed, the ears have not heard off nor the hearts ever comprehended.

However, the worst of people will attempt to shame those who perform the visitation of your graves, the same way that people shame the adulterer due to her actions. They are the most wretched of my *ummah*. May Allah (swt) never grant them my intercession.¹²

12 *Wasā'il al-Shi'ah*, vol. 14, p. 382–3, *ḥadīth* 19433.



RESPONSES TO OBJECTIONS TO BUILDING SHRINES

Throughout the works of Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah,¹³ and Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, several points have been presented to support their opinion of the prohibition of the building of shrines. The following are the main arguments.

1. VERSES OF THE QUR'AN

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَحْيَاءُ وَلَا الْأَمْوَاتُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسْمِعُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَمَا أَنتَ بِمُسْمِعٍ
مَّن فِي الْقُبُورِ

'Nor are the living equal to the dead. Indeed, Allah makes whomever He wishes to hear, and you cannot make those who are in the graves hear'

(Holy Qur'an, 35:22)

Objection: this verse in the Qur'an points to the dead in the graves not having the ability to hear, and hence *ziyārah* and visitation, as well as seeking intercession, has no purpose.

Response: The verse has been discussed in detail by exegetes, many of whom have presented the meaning as metaphorical and not literal. For example, the Sunni scholar, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, in his famous commentary, *Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, notes that life and death in this verse denotes the belief and spiritual status of the human rather than their physical existence in this world. The Holy Prophet Muḥammad (s) possessed a very gentle and compassionate heart. Due to this, he often felt greatly saddened by the lack of response to his message. The verse, therefore, is consoling the Prophet (s), by describing those who rejected the teachings as having hearts which are dead (unresponsive), and will not be taking heed.¹⁴ Other well-known Sunni scholars and exegetes, such as al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Suyūṭī, and Ibn Kathīr, also present this opinion.

¹³ A prominent student of Ibn Taymiyyah, known as a jurist, who died 1350 CE.

¹⁴ *Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, accessed via al-tafsir.com.

Additionally, verses of the Qur'an, as well as established narrations, point to the fact that some of the dead can hear and are indeed given special life by Allah (swt). For example:

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾

'Do not suppose those who were slain in the way of Allah to be dead; rather they are living and provided for near their Lord'

(Holy Qur'an, 3:169)

Similarly, numerous narrations in *Sahih* compilations point to the Holy Prophet (s) speaking to the dead after the Battle of Badr:

Narrated by Ibn 'Umar: The Messenger of Allah (s) spoke to the people (buried) in the well saying: 'Have you found out that what your Lord had promised you is true?'

Then someone exclaimed: 'Are you calling out to the dead!'

The Prophet (s) replied: 'You do not hear better than they do, except they do not respond.'¹⁵

Another narration supports this as well:

Allah's Messenger (s) let the dead bodies of the unbelievers who fought in Badr (lie unburied) for three days. He then came to them and sat by their side and called them and said: 'O Abū Jahl ibn Hishām, O Umayyah ibn Khalaf, O 'Utbah ibn Rabī'ah, O Shaybah ibn Rabī'ah, have you not found what your Lord had promised with you to be true? As for me, I have found the promises of my Lord to be (perfectly) true.'

'Umar listened to the words of Allah's Apostle (may peace be upon him) and said: 'Allah's Messenger, how do they listen and respond to you? They are dead and their bodies have decayed.'

Thereupon he (the Holy Prophet (s)) said: 'By Him in Whose Hand is my life, what I am saying to them, even you cannot hear more distinctly than they, but

15 *Sahih Bukhari*, vol. 2, book. 23, no. 452.

they lack the power to reply.' Then he commanded that they should be buried in the well of Badr.¹⁶

In addition, Imam al-Qurṭubī in his famous exegesis has related the following:

A villager came to see us three days after the burial of the Holy Prophet (s). He placed himself near the Prophet's grave, sprinkled its earth over his body and said: 'O Messenger of Allah (s), you spoke and we heard. You received commands from Allah (swt) and we received commands from you, and one of these divine commands is:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ
جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٦٤﴾

'Had they, when they wronged themselves, come to you and pleaded to Allah (swt) for forgiveness, and the Apostle had pleaded for forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allah All-Clement, All-Merciful'

(Holy Qur'an, 4:64)

It is true that I have wronged myself, therefore, you should pray for my forgiveness.'

[In response to the villager's act of imploring] he was called out from the grave: 'There is no doubt that you have been forgiven.'¹⁷

Therefore, it can be construed from the above verses and narrations that the dead can hear with the permission of Allah (swt).

2. CONSENSUS OF MUSLIMS

In the fatwa signed and endorsed by the chief jurist Ibn Bulayhid, there was a claim that the prohibition of shrine construction at places of worship was near unanimously agreed by Muslim scholars. This claim is false, since a brief and objective look at history reveals how the chamber of the Prophet (s) was maintained and built by Muslims throughout generations. This is also the case with the graves of Abū Bakr and 'Umar being adjacent to that of the Prophet (s). As reported by historians, the chamber of

16 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, book. 40, no. 6869.

17 *Al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, vol. 5, p. 265–6.

'Ā'ishah was divided in half, and a wall erected to separate the graves from her room. Later, the likes of 'Abdullāh ibn Zubayr raised the wall as it was low.

Similarly, a look at the history of the Baqī' Cemetery, as well as many shrines in places such as Egypt and Turkey, reveals how Muslims maintained their structures and built domes and mausoleums. The claim of the consensus by the scholars is not verified or backed up with evidence. Only a very small fraction of Muslims, namely those following hard-line Salafi ideology, have espoused such damning verdicts.

3. THE NARRATIONS OF PROHIBITION

A major component of the call to reject shrine construction stems from a narrow interpretation of some Prophetic narrations that such buildings should be obliterated. Some of these narrations are discussed below.

Narration I:

Abū al-Hayyāj says that 'Alī told him: 'I assign you for a task which the Holy Prophet (s) assigned me for the same. Do not leave any picture but that which you erase nor any high grave but that you level it.'¹⁸

In order for such a narration to be accepted, its chain needs to be fairly sound and its instruction and purpose ought to be clear. Consequently, similar deductions should normally be made from a tradition by experts in the area. Regarding the chain of narrations, several Sunni scholars have rejected this narration based on the weakness of some of its narrators. For example, in his famous *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī questions the credibility of some of the narrators of this tradition, such as Sufyān al-Thawrī, Ḥabīb ibn Abī Thābit and Wakī'.¹⁹

What is also interesting is that the entire six '*Ṣaḥīḥ*' compilations of *ḥadīth*, known as the canonical works, only contain one narration from Abū al-Hayyāj (which is this one). This highlights that the compilers such as Bukhārī and Muslim did not consider him reliable to include other narrations presented by him. In terms of meaning, the narration uses the word '*sawaytah*' which means 'to make equal' or 'to make it straight'. It does not say 'level it to the ground', as suggested by the advocates of shrine

18 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb al-janā'iz*, vol. 3, p. 61. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, bāb mā jā' fī taswīyyat al-qubūr*, vol. 2 p. 256. *Sunan al-Nisā'ī, bāb taswīyyat al-qabr*, vol. 4, p. 88.

19 *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 11, p. 125.

demolition. That is why many Muslim jurisprudential schools have permitted for the grave to be higher than the ground, at least by one span.²⁰

What the narration is perhaps pointing towards is the recommendation that the top of a grave should be flat and not humped. Nevertheless, many Muslims have not followed this recommendation, and today some graves in Muslim countries are not presented as a straight construction. Furthermore we do not have evidence from historical records that Imam 'Alī (a) himself went and destroyed graves or levelled others.

Narration II:

In *Sahīh Muslim*, another narration used to support the demolition of shrines is the following:

The narrator says: 'We were with Fuḍalah ibn 'Ubayd in Rome when one of our companions died. Fuḍalah ordered that his grave be made uniform and said that he had heard the Holy Prophet (s) giving instructions for the levelling of graves.'²¹

The key to understanding this tradition is in determining the meaning of the word '*sawaytah*' which possesses three possible meanings. Firstly, the meaning could be to destroy the structure over the graves. This possibility is rejected because the graves which were in Medina were not possessing structures or domes. Secondly, the meaning could be to level the surface of the grave to the ground. This is against the *Sunnah* (tradition) of the Prophet (s) which is clearly in favour of the grave being above the ground by one span. Thirdly, the meaning could also possibly be to skim the grave and make even the uneven portions and hence remove the hump shape. These interpretations are clear and require no further elaboration.²²

The famous commentator of *Sahīh Muslim*, al-Nawawī, writes: 'It is a *sunnah* (tradition) that the grave should not possess excessive height above the ground and should not have the shape of a hump of a camel. However, it should be one span above the ground and should be even.'²³ This means that many Sunni scholars have derived a similar deduction from these narrations – that the grave should be straight and not shaped like a hump.

20 *Al-Fiqh 'ala al-Madhāhib al-Arba'ah*, vol. 1, p. 420.

21 *Sahīh Muslim, Kitāb al-Janā'iz*, vol. 3 p. 61.

22 *Wahhabism*, accessed via al-islam.org.

23 *Sharḥ Sahīh Muslim*, vol. 7, p. 36.

Al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Qaṣṭallānī, in his book *Irshād al-Sārī fī Sharḥ Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, has interpreted the tradition in a similar way:

It is a *sunnah* that a grave should be surfaced and we should never abandon this *sunnah* just because surfacing of the grave is the motto of the *rawāfid*.²⁴ When we say that the *sunnah* is the surfacing of the grave (having no difference

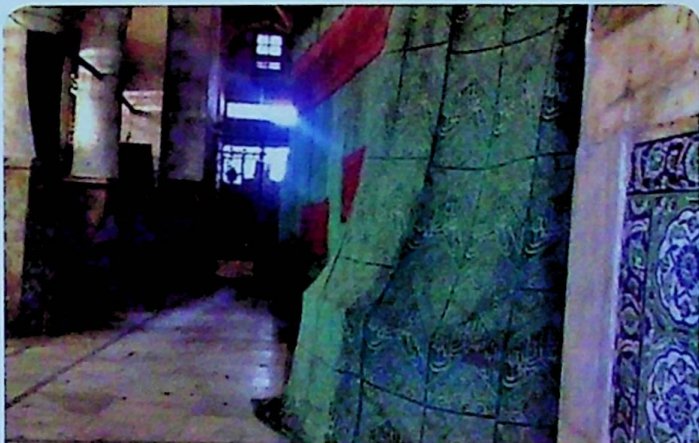
with the tradition of Abū al-Hayyāj) it is because the objective is not to make the grave on par with the ground, but the objective is to make the surface of the grave flat even though it is above the ground level.²⁵

Clearly, these narrations lack any reference to constructions over graves such as domes or shrines. If it is argued that the narrations point to the levelling of graves, one struggles to see how it is applicable to constructions over graves, especially as these buildings protect the visitor from extremes of temperature and facilitate the remembrance of God.

Taking this into consideration, evidence suggests that many Sunni *fiqh* schools have not prohibited the building of shrines, but have rather advised against it. This is stated in the book *al-Fiqh 'ala al-Madhāhib al-Arba'ah* (Jurisprudence according to the Four Schools of Thought): 'It is *makrūh* (abominable) to build a house, dome, school, or mosque over the grave.'²⁶

THE FAMOUS NARRATION CONCERNING THE PROPHETS' GRAVES AND WORSHIP

Perhaps the other main narration used against shrine building is the following, found



Inside the Chamber of the burial place of Prophet Muḥammad (s)

24 This is a derogatory term used to refer to the Shia by some.

25 *Irshād al-Sārī*, vol. 2 p. 468.

26 *Al-Fiqh 'ala al-Madhāhib al-Arba'ah*, vol. 1, p. 421.

in Bukhārī's compilation: 'May Allah curse the Jews and Christians for they built places of worship at the graves of their Prophets.'²⁷

Response: Firstly, the validity of this narration is questioned since it clearly contradicts the Qur'anic direction of permissibility of shrine building, demonstrated in the story of the people of the cave. The people built a mosque over the graves and the Qur'an did not rebuke this. Secondly, this trend is unheard of in history. Which Jews does this narration refer to? Where are the examples of such practice from the people of the past? The Qur'an tells us that many Prophets were killed and disrespected by their community, making it highly unlikely that they turned their graves into mosques. Thirdly, this goes against the practice of Muslims for hundreds of years, especially the building of a mausoleum and the construction around the blessed grave of the Prophet Muḥammad (s). Did the Muslims before not know this *ḥadīth*? Fourthly, some well-known scholars, like Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, have said that this *ḥadīth* suggests the building of shrines is *makrūh* (not recommended) but not prohibited.²⁸ Fifthly, some Mālikī scholars have understood this *ḥadīth* to prohibit prostration to the grave and not God and to consider the grave as the direction of prayers.²⁹

27 *Saḥīḥ Bukhārī*, vol. 1, book. 8, no. 427.

28 *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 1, p. 438.

29 *Tanwīr al-Hawālik fī Sharḥ Muwāṭṭa' Mālik*, p. 189.



CHAPTER TWELVE

SEEKING BLESSINGS (TABARRUK)

Strong reprimands and frequent prohibitions are the unfortunate norm for a visitor to the shrine of Prophet Muḥammad (s), as well as the Baqī' Cemetery in Medina when they seek blessings by touching the graves. They often risk arrest or beating by the authorities, citing 'shirk' (polytheism) and the 'prohibition in Islamic law'.

Seeking blessings (*tabarruk*) and healing from objects associated with a chosen servant of God has been well established in the Qur'an. This has further been supported in innumerable narrations and demonstrated through the actions of the family and companions of the Holy Prophet (s). Some examples follow.

1. THE SHIRT OF PROPHET YUSUF (A)

When Prophet Yusuf's brothers informed him that their father, Prophet Ya'qūb (Jacob) had become blind, the Qur'an tells us that he gave them his very own shirt and asked that they place it on his face, in order for Prophet Ya'qūb (a) to regain his vision with God's permission:

فَلَمَّا أَن جَاءَ الْبَشِيرُ أَلْقَاهُ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ، فَارْتَدَّ بَصِيرًا

'When the bearer of good news arrived, he cast it (the shirt of Yusuf) on his face, and he regained his sight (...)'

(Holy Qur'an, 12:96)

Why did Prophet Yusuf stipulate his shirt to be placed on his father's face? Could Prophet Yusuf not have supplicated to Allah (swt) for the restoration of Prophet

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Seeking blessings (*tabarruk*) and healing from objects associated with a chosen servant of God has been well established in the Qur'an. This has further been supported in innumerable narrations and demonstrated through the actions of the family and companions of the Holy Prophet (s). Some examples follow.

1. THE SHIRT OF PROPHET YUSUF (A)

When Prophet Yusuf's brothers informed him that their father, Prophet Ya'qūb (Jacob) had become blind, the Qur'an tells us that he gave them his very own shirt and asked that they place it on his face, in order for Prophet Ya'qūb (a) to regain his vision with God's permission:

فَلَمَّا أَن جَاءَ الْبَشِيرُ أَلْقَاهُ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ، فَارْتَدَّ بَصِيرًا ط

'When the bearer of good news arrived, he cast it (the shirt of Yusuf) on his face, and he regained his sight (...)'

(Holy Qur'an, 12:96)

Why did Prophet Yusuf stipulate his shirt to be placed on his father's face? Could Prophet Yusuf not have supplicated to Allah (swt) for the restoration of Prophet

Ya'qūb's eye-sight? It is evident that the shirt had blessings and extraordinary healing, not because of its material but rather because it belonged to a chosen servant of the Almighty (swt). Hence, due to this association, by the will and command of God, it was made special and a source of healing.

2. THE STAFF OF PROPHET MŪSĀ (A)

In numerous Qur'anic verses, we are informed of the wonderful story of Prophet Mūsā (a) and his struggles against Fir'awn (Pharaoh). On several occasions, Prophet Mūsā (a) was commanded by Allah (swt) to use his staff, which would turn into a snake by His permission:

﴿١١٧﴾ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾

'And We signalled to Moses: "Throw down your staff." And behold, it was swallowing what they had faked'

(Holy Qur'an, 7:117)

Additionally, the Qur'an asserts the command to use the staff for the splitting of the sea:

فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْبَحْرَ فَانْفَلَقَ فَكَانَ كُلُّ فِرْقٍ كَالطَّوْدِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٦٣﴾

'Thereupon We revealed to Moses: "Strike the sea with your staff!" Whereupon it parted, and each part was as if it were a great mountain'

(Holy Qur'an, 26:63)

Thus, much significance is given to this physical object. Again, this is not due to it merely being a wooden stick, but rather its importance is derived from the fact that the Almighty (swt) placed emphasis upon it, and made it the means for the miracles to be witnessed.

Similarly, the Qur'an also presents the story of Ṭālūt, an Israelite king chosen by the Almighty (swt) (2:246). One distinguishable aspect of this individual, according to the verses, is the reappearance of a box (or ark) which contains items that belonged to

Mūsā (a) and Hārūn (a). These were beloved to the Israelites, and they used to seek blessings from them:

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ هَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٤٨﴾

'Their Prophet said to them, "Indeed the sign of his kingship shall be that the Ark will come to you, bearing tranquillity from your Lord and the relics left behind by the House of Moses and the House of Aaron, borne by the angels. There is indeed a sign in that for you, should you be faithful"'

(Holy Qur'an, 2:248).

If seeking blessings from objects that belonged to Prophets was prohibited, the Almighty (swt) would ensure that the Israelites never received it, especially as narrations suggest that it had been lost. Conversely, the Qur'an tells us that the angels ensured Ṭālūt was presented with these valuable belongings, and it was deemed important since it convinced people of the veracity that Ṭālūt was indeed a man chosen by God to lead them in the fight against Jālūt (Goliath).

3. THE HOLY KA'BAH AND THE BLACK STONE

The Sacred House of Allah (swt) is described in the Holy Qur'an as the first place of worship as well as an area encompassed with blessings and guidance:

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

'Indeed, the first house to be set up for mankind is the one at Bakkah blessed and a guidance for all nations'

(Holy Qur'an, 3:96)

Muslims throughout history have agreed on the importance of this special place, and often make a concerted effort to kiss the cubic structure at any given opportunity. In addition, it is near unanimously agreed upon that the black stone comes from Paradise,

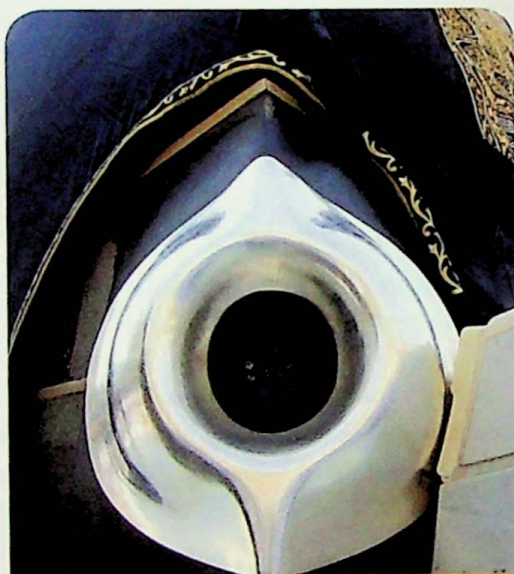
hence the great significance associated with it.

Copious narrations state how Prophet Muḥammad (s) and the companions were seen kissing both objects:

Narrated Salim that his father said:

“I saw Allah’s Apostle arriving at Mekkah; he kissed the Black Stone Corner first whilst doing ṭawāf (...).”¹

Undoubtedly, such actions by the Prophet (s) were to signify the blessings associated with this sacred place, since Allah (swt) has favoured it and bestowed His Mercy upon it.



The Black Stone attached to the Holy Ka'bah

4. EXAMPLES OF BLESSED PLACES IN THE QUR'AN

Several verses in the Holy Qur'an highlight the fact that the Almighty (swt) has blessed certain locations around the world due to their association with Him. They include the area which Mūsā (a) communicated with the Almighty, known as Ṭuwwā, as well as Masjid al-Aqṣā:

فَلَمَّا أَتَاهَا نُودِيَ مِنْ شَاطِئِ الْوَادِ الْأَيْمَنِ فِي الْبُقْعَةِ الْمُبَارَكَةِ مِنَ الشَّجَرَةِ أَنْ يَمْوِسَىٰ إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

‘When he approached it, he was called from the right bank of the valley at the blessed spot from the tree: “Moses! Indeed, I am Allah, the Lord of all the worlds!”’

(Holy Qur'an, 28:30).

¹ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 2, book. 26, no. 673.

Also:

سُبْحَنَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ
الْأَقْصَا الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿١﴾

'Immaculate is He who carried His servant on a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque whose environs We have blessed (...)'

(Holy Qur'an, 17:1)

The evidence presented in the Qur'an is clear enough to anyone who might have misgivings. Sacredness and spiritual blessings seem to be well infused in any land associated with the Almighty (swt) and it is undoubtedly a tremendous opportunity for us to make the most of our visits to such holy places.

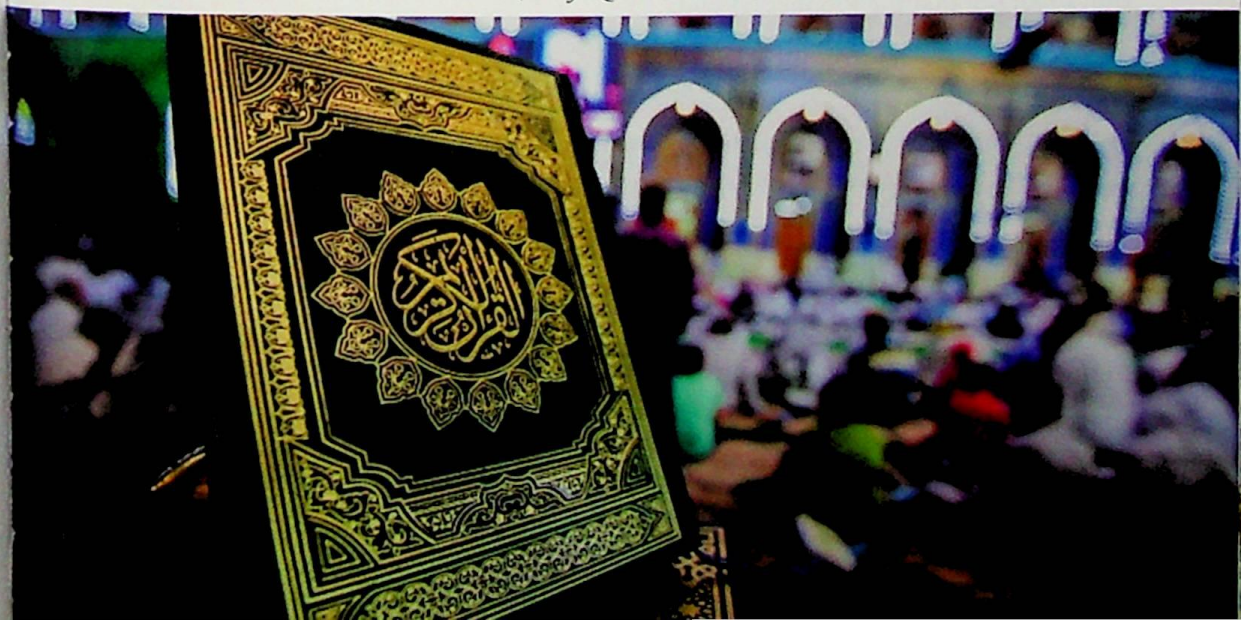
5. THE BLESSINGS OF THE QUR'AN

The immaculate and infallible words of the Almighty (swt) are considered a great blessing from Him. This is affirmed in the Holy Book:

كَتَبْنَا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٢٩﴾

'[It is] a blessed Book that We have sent down to you, so that they may contemplate its signs (...)'

(Holy Qur'an, 38:29)



King 'Abd al-Azīz al-Sa'ūd (d.1953)² was once discussing the issue surrounding the kissing of the shrine of the Prophet (s) and its prohibition. He was then presented with a copy of the Qur'an within a leather cover. When the king kissed the cover, one scholar objected that this constitutes polytheism. The king replied that it is not the cover he is honouring, but rather the Qur'an. In reply, the scholar said that, by kissing the shrine of the Prophet (s), it is not the metal that is being honoured but rather the blessed body buried within.

6. BLESSINGS SOUGHT FROM OTHER OBJECTS

Numerous Prophetic narrations point to the blessings and healing obtained from various creations of the Almighty (swt) by His permission. Some such examples are as follows.

I. The soil of Medina

It is narrated that the Prophet Muḥammad (s) said:

The soil (of Medina) is healing from all ailments.³

II. The Yemeni corner of the Ka'bah

Ibn 'Amr narrates:

The black stone and Yemeni corner are part of Paradise (...) whosoever touches them and has any problems or ailments will be cured.⁴

III. Zamzam water

Saffiya narrates that the Prophet (s) said:

Zamzam is healing from all ailments.⁵

7. BLESSINGS FROM THE PROPHET (S) AND HIS BELONGINGS

I. Narrated from Abi Juhayfah:

2 The founder and first monarch of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

3 *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, ḥadīth 34828.

4 *Ibid*, ḥadīth 34742.

5 *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, ḥadīth 34777.



*A bowl said to belong to Prophet Muhammad (s)
kept in Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, Turkey*

I came to the Prophet (s) (...) and saw Bilāl taking from the *wuḍū* (ritual ablution) water of the Prophet (s). People were doing the same, and wiping their faces with it. He who could not get any (of the Prophet's *wuḍū* water) took some from the wetness of the hands of others (who got some).⁶

II. Anas narrates:

I saw the Messenger of Allah (s) whilst the barber was cutting his hair. His companions were eager to obtain his hair in their hands.⁷

III. Muslim narrates:

The companions used to bring their children to the Prophet (s) for seeking *barakah* (blessings) (...) and he used to bless them.⁸

IV. Narrated from Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī:

I was unconscious and was visited by the Prophet (s). He performed *wuḍū* and poured over me water from his *wuḍū*, and hence I became conscious.⁹

V. Abū Hazim narrates:

6 *Sahīh Bukhārī*, Book of Clothing, chapter of the red dome, *ḥadīth* 5859.

7 *Sahīh Muslim*, vol. 15, p. 83. *Musnad Ibn Ḥanbal*, vol. 3, p. 591.

8 *Sahīh Muslim*, *ḥadīth* 1691.

9 *Sahīh Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-*Wuḍū*, chapter of the Prophet (s) pouring *wuḍū* water over the unconscious, *ḥadīth* 194.

Sahl ibn Sa'd told me that the Messenger of Allah (s) said on the Day of Khaybar: 'I will give the standard tomorrow to a man whom Allah will bring victory through him. He loves Allah and His Messenger and Allah and His Messenger love him.'

Thereafter, people wondered who this person will be, eagerly wanting this for themselves. Next morning, the Messenger (s) asked: 'Where is 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib?' He was told that he has a problem with his eyes. The Prophet (s) requested that he is brought to him. When he arrived, the Messenger placed saliva into his eyes and prayed for him. Thereafter his eyes became as if there was no problem in them, and he was given the standard.¹⁰

VI. Bukhārī has also dedicated an entire chapter in volume 4 of his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, describing the significance of the belongings of the Prophet (s), such as his staff, sword, and ring as well as items used by the companions for seeking blessings.

VII. Ibn Sa'd narrates:

When 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Azīz was about to pass away, he asked for the Prophet's hair and part of his nail clippings, and requested that they are placed inside his coffin.¹¹

VIII. Ibn Sīrīn narrates:

Anas ibn Mālīk had a staff of the Messenger of Allah (s), and it was buried with him in his grave.¹²

Today visitors to the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, Turkey are able to view many objects said to belong to Prophet Muḥammad (s), his family, companions as well as other prophets. This includes pieces of the Prophet's hair, sandal, tooth, bowl and other belongings.

8. THE BLESSINGS FROM THE GRAVE OF THE PROPHET (S)

Many historical narrations point to the Ahl al-Bayt as well as the companions seeking blessings from the grave of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (s).

10 *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, vol. 4, p. 30. *Musnad Ibn Ḥanbal*, vol. 5, p. 333; and many other sources.

11 *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd*, vol. 5, p. 406.

12 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 6, p. 6.



A rare photo taken inside the chamber of the Prophet Muḥammad (s) showing the exact location of his grave

- ① Prophet Muḥammad (s) ② Abū Bakr bin Abī Quḥāfah ③ ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb

I. Imam ‘Alī (a) narrates:

When the Messenger of Allah (s) passed away, Fāṭimah came to his grave and took soil from it, placing it on her eyes. She then cried and recited poetry.¹³

II. Abū al-Dardā’ narrates:

Bilāl (the adhan caller of the Prophet (s)) saw the Messenger of Allah (s) in his dream. The Prophet (s) said to him: ‘Why such a long-time o Bilāl? Is it not time that you visit me?’ He woke up saddened and fearful. Bilāl subsequently made his way to Medina and visited the grave of the Prophet (s). He wept next to it, and kept wiping his face over the grave. Thereafter, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (may God be pleased with them) approached, he hugged and kissed them.¹⁴

III. Imam ‘Alī (a) narrates:

A bedouin arrived three days after we buried the Messenger of Allah (s). He threw himself on the grave, placed soil on his head, and recited:

13 *Wafā al-Wafā*, vol. 2, p. 444. *Al-Fatwā al-Fiqhiyyah Ibn Ḥajar*, vol. 2, p. 18.

14 *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 1, p. 244. *Tārīkh Damishq*, vol. 7, p. 137.

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ
وَأَسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٦٤﴾

'Had they, when they wronged themselves, come to you and pleaded to Allah (swt) for forgiveness, and the Apostle had pleaded for forgiveness for them (...)'

(Holy Qur'an 4:64)

Then he said: 'I have been unjust to myself and I've come asking for forgiveness from you.'

He heard a call from the grave: 'You have been forgiven.'¹⁵

IV. Dāwūd ibn Abī Šāliḥ narrates:

Marwān (ibn Ḥakam) saw a man placing the side of his face on the grave of the Prophet (s). He took his neck and said: 'Do you know what you are doing?'

The man was Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī (companion of the Prophet (s)). He said: 'Yes, it is not about the rocks, I have come for the Messenger of Allah (s).'¹⁶

I heard him (the Prophet (s)) say: 'Do not be saddened over the faith when the right people are its leaders, but be grieved when the wrong people are at the realm.'

V. 'Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal narrates:

I asked my father about the man who comes to the pulpit of the Prophet (s), kissing it to receive blessings, and does the same thing at the grave seeking reward from Allah (swt). He replied: "There is no problem doing so."¹⁷

This narration is important, since the Salafi school considers itself Ḥanbalī, claiming to implement the teachings of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.

VI. Al-Samhūdī narrates:

¹⁵ *Wafā al-Wafā*, vol. 4, p. 139.

¹⁶ *Mustadrak*, vol. 4, p. 515. *Wafā al-Wafā*, vol. 2, p. 410. *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, vol. 5, p. 423.

¹⁷ *Wafā al-Wafā*, vol. 2, p. 343.

The companions used to take soil from the grave of the Prophet (s).¹⁸

VII. Ibn Qudamah al-Ḥanbalī narrates:

It is recommended to be buried in a cemetery where the righteous and the martyrs are found, so that their blessings are obtained. This is also the case in holy lands. This is the tradition of the companions and those who followed them, in terms of seeking blessings (*tabarruk*) from the grave of the Prophet (s) and seeking healing from the soil of his grave. No one disagreed about this practice except the Umayyad rulers, such as Marwān ibn Ḥakam, whom the Prophet (s) expelled and Allah cursed (...) ¹⁹

9. SEEKING BLESSINGS FROM THE AHL AL-BAYT

Numerous traditions point to the reality that Muslims sought blessings from the glorious household of the Prophet (s) and anything associated with them.

18 Ibid., vol. 1, p. 544.

19 *Uṣd al-Ghābah*, vol. 5, p. 144. *Sunan al-Nisā'ī*, vol. 6, p. 485.

* Image below: A Qur'anic verse [33:33] in praise of the Ahl al-Bayt.



I. Al-Samhūdī narrates:

The Ahl al-Bayt used to seek *barakah* (blessings) from a stone in the house of Fāṭimah (a), since it is narrated from 'Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā (a) that he said: "It is where Fāṭimah used to perform her prayers."²⁰

II. Ibn Hajar narrates:

When 'Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā (a) reached Nayshāpūr, people gathered around him. When he emerged and people saw him, they began to scream, cry, tear their clothes, place soil on themselves, and seek the soil under his camel.²¹

III. Ibn Sa'd narrates:

When al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī left Medina towards Mekkah, he passed by a man named Ibn Muṭī'. He was digging a well (...)

Ibn Muṭī' asked: 'I have dug this well but little water is coming out. Can you pray to Allah for some blessing?'

Imam said: 'Bring me some of its water.' He drank some of it, gargled it then returned it to the well. It subsequently began to flow (with pure water).²²

IV. Abū Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn Mu'ammal narrates:

We left with the Imam of *Ḥadīth*, Abū Bakr ibn Khuzaymah,²³ and his brother in law, Abū 'Alī al-Thaqafī, with a few of our companions to perform the visitation of 'Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā in Tūs. I saw him (Abū Khuzaymah) honour the tomb, humble himself before it, and express devotion, the extent of which surprised us all.²⁴

V. Al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī narrates:

I heard al-Ḥasan ibn Ibrāhīm (Abū 'Alī) al-Khalāl, who was the Sheikh of the Ḥanbalīs of his time, say: "Every time I have worries about something I go towards

20 *Wafā al-Wafā*, vol. 1, p. 572.

21 *Al-Sawā'iq al-Muhriqah*, p. 310.

22 *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd*, vol. 5, p. 107.

23 A well-known Shāfi'ī scholar and jurist known as Sheikh al-Islām, who originates from Nayshāpūr. He died 311 AH. He is considered a Salafi scholar by some.

24 *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 7, p. 339.

the grave of Mūsā ibn Ja'far, seeking his intercession. Thereafter, Allah makes my matters easier."²⁵

VI. Al-Shabrawī narrates:

The Jurist Zakī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Azīm²⁶ was asked (about the shrine of the head of Imam al-Ḥusayn in Cairo) and said: "This is an honourable place, with its blessings apparent, and the belief in it brings virtue."²⁷

THE BLESSINGS OF THE SOIL OF KARBALA AND GRAVE OF IMAM AL-ḤUSAYN (A)

There are many narrations from the Ahl al-Bayt that establish the blessed nature of the soil of Karbala and the grave of the grandson of the Prophet (s). One example is narrated from Muḥammad ibn Muslim, who said:

I heard Abā Ja'far (al-Bāqir) and Ja'far ibn Muḥammad (al-Ṣādiq) peace be upon them say: "Allah has honoured the killing of al-Ḥusayn (a) in return for the Imams to be from his progeny, healing from his soil, and the answering of supplications under his dome".²⁸



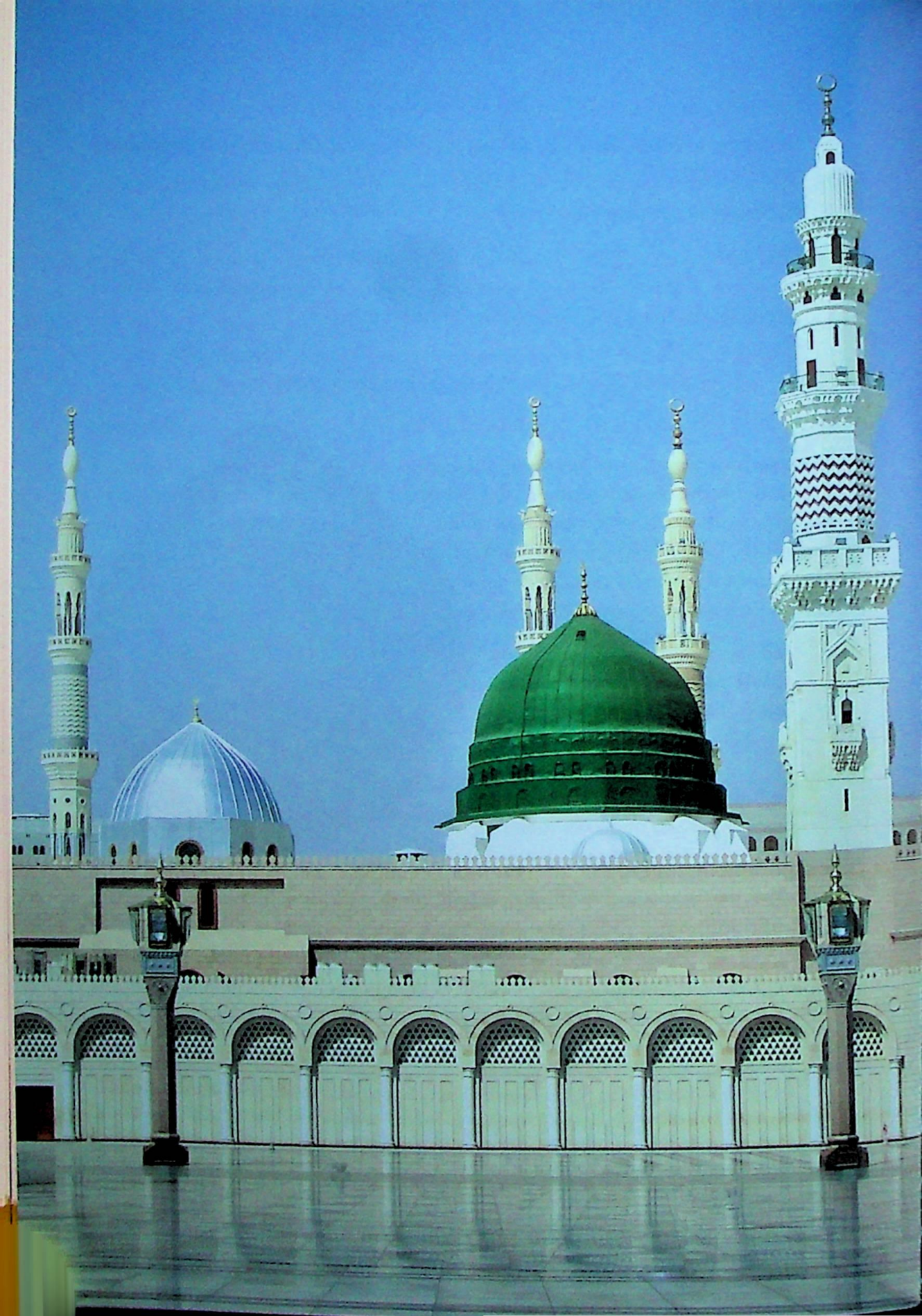
For any objective researcher who comes across these narrations and others like them, the evidence for the seeking of blessings from certain physical objects is plentiful. Clearly, the practice is not restricted to the Shia but rather occurs in other Muslim denominations as well. Unfortunately, the hard-line Wahhabi teachings have manipulated the concept of monotheism to suit their objective of eradicating such legitimate practices.

25 *Tārīkh Baghdād*, vol. 1, p. 120.

26 Known as al-Muntharī, he was an Egyptian Shāfi'ī Scholar and narrator of *ḥadīth*, who died in 656 AH.

27 *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, vol. 1, p. 121.

28 *Wasā'il al-Shi'ah*, vol. 10, p. 329.



CHAPTER THIRTEEN

ETIQUETTES OF ZIYĀRAH

The teachings of Islam present comprehensive guidelines on the etiquettes of many practices. This is to enhance spirituality and improve conduct in various spheres of life. The Prophet Muḥammad (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt (a) highlighted the need to apply these etiquettes in our lives. Whilst recognising the importance of these graves and the significance of *ziyārah*, the visitor is encouraged to practice and apply the necessary *ādāb* (etiquettes) that will undoubtedly help with the fulfilment of the spiritual and physical benefits of this noble act. These etiquettes are listed below.

1. SINCERITY

The intention should be purely to seek the satisfaction of Allah (swt) alone. The visitor must be careful not to perform the *ziyārah* to show off to others or to boast about this blessing. The purer the intention is, the greater the receiving of divine blessings and mercy.

2. PHYSICAL PURITY

It is recommended that the visitor remain in *wuḍū* and is in a state of purity whilst in these holy places. Performing *ghusl* before the visit, especially on the first occasion, has been mentioned in countless narrations. The wearing of clean and pure clothes, as well as putting on perfume, is also recommended.

3. MANNER OF APPROACHING

When walking to and when walking within the cemetery, the visitor is advised to walk

with humility and respect. Shoes and sandals should be removed, and the steps taken should be shortened. This is currently not possible in Baqī', but should be observed when the cemetery and the domes are rebuilt again Insha'Allah (God willing).

4. SEEKING PERMISSION TO ENTER

Before entering a holy shrine or cemetery, the visitor is recommended to seek permission from Allah (swt), His Messenger, the Imam, as well as the angels. This has been established widely through various supplications and refers to the concept that the Holy Prophet (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt (a) indeed hear the permission and respond, despite us not perceiving it. It affirms the sacredness of the shrine and its status as a place of sanctity and guidance. The seeking of permission to enter is a Qur'anic recommendation:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ

'O you who have faith! Do not enter the Prophet's houses unless permission is granted you (...)'

(Holy Qur'an , 33:53)

Whilst verbally asking for permission, it is recommended that the visitor feels a sense of humility in their heart, asking themselves whether they are deserving of permission being granted. Shedding tears as well as expressing thankfulness for this blessing is also advised. At the entrance, it is prudent to enter using the right foot, whilst reciting *takbīr* ('*Allāhu akbar*'). Taking short steps, whilst lowering the head in humbleness, is also recommended.

5. REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH (SWT)

Inside the holy shrine, engaging in worship and remembrance of the Almighty (swt) is highly desirable. This can be through *ṣalāh* (prayers), Qur'an recitation, *istighfār* (seeking forgiveness), *tasbīh* (glorification), or *du'ā* (supplication).

6. CONSIDERATION OF OTHERS

Possessing a good understanding of the blessed nature of *ziyārah* should make the

visitor appreciate the importance of respecting other visitors in the shrine. This entails taking utmost care not to hurt or push anyone, and trying hard to ensure that other visitors are not disrespected. Generosity, smiling, and offering kind words are important demonstrations of good moral conduct in these places. At the same time, Allah (swt) mentions the need to revere the sacredness of these blessed sites by avoiding shouting or raising one's voice:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ
 بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَن تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٢﴾

'O you who have faith! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet (s), and do not speak aloud to him as you shout to one another, lest your works should fail without you being aware.'

(Holy Qur'an, 49:2)

7. RECITATION OF ESTABLISHED ZIYĀRAH

It is highly recommended to greet and send salutations upon the Prophet (s) and his family using the supplications and invocations that have been narrated from them. Each member of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) has one or more designated *ziyārah*, and there are some that can be recited for all the *ma'sūmīn* (a). This includes *Ziyārah Amīnullah*, which is one of the most authentic *ziyārahs* today. After each *ziyārah*, recite two *rak'ahs* of *Ṣalāh*, known as *Ṣalāt al-ziyārah*. For the Holy Prophet (s), it is recommended that this prayer is performed in the Blessed Rawḍah.¹ For the Imams, it should be performed next to or behind the grave. Prayers, whilst the mausoleum is behind the visitor, should be avoided. Currently, this is not possible in Baqī'.

8. PERFORMANCE OF OBLIGATORY PRAYERS AND CONGREGATIONAL ṢALĀH

The shrines of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) are great places of worship of the Almighty (swt) and hence performing wājib and congregational *Ṣalāh* earns significant reward as well as blessings. This is especially the case if the prayers are performed at their recommended

¹ The area between the grave of the Prophet (s) and his pulpit.

time (*awwal al-waqt*). Likewise, praying qadā (to make up missed prayers) is also encouraged in these sites, and brings more reward than their performance elsewhere (except Masjid al-Nabī and Masjid al-Ḥarām in Mekkah, where the reward is even greater). Unfortunately today, the authorities do not allow the performance of prayers inside Baqī'.

9. FACING THE MAUSOLEUM OF THE MA'ŠŪM AND STANDING WHILST RECITING ZIYĀRAH

This demonstrates respect to the one whom the visitor has come to visit. In addition, it is recommended to touch the *ḍarīḥ* (tomb) of the *ma'šūm* if possible (the authorities in Medina have forbidden this for the visitors of the Prophet's shrine as well as the Baqī' Cemetery). It is good practice to place the right cheek followed by the left on the *ḍarīḥ* and



ask for *hājāt* (needs and desires) from Allah (swt). At the same time, it is important that consideration for others is observed and, in trying to get close to the *ḍarīḥ*, the visitor does not injure, hurt or push others. This is crucial, since the spirit and reward of *ziyārah* may otherwise be lost.

10. RECITATION OF ṢALAWĀT

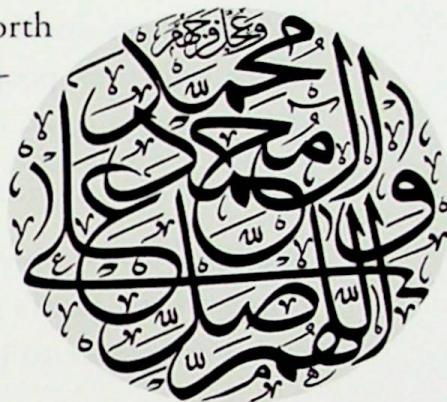
The beautiful invocation for blessings and salutations upon the Holy Prophet (s) and his pure progeny has been emphasised in the Holy Qur'an:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٥٦﴾

'Indeed Allah and His angels bless the Prophet; O you who have faith! Invoke blessings on him and invoke peace upon him in a worthy manner.'

(Holy Qur'an, 33:56)

The *Ṣalawāt* is a means of earning reward, bringing forth mercy, and placing happiness in the hearts of the Ahl al-Bayt (a). Continuous *Ṣalawāt* earns the visitor special reward, particularly in these holy sites. This is affirmed by the Ahl al-Bayt (a): 'The heaviest good deed placed on the scales on the Day of Resurrection is *Ṣalawāt* upon Muḥammad and his household.'²



SPIRITUAL TIPS FOR THE VISITATION OF THE HOLY SHRINES

For the visitors seeking spiritual purification and increased blessings whilst at the holy shrines and at Baqī', some recommendations have been presented by our scholars. These have been listed below.

1. Utilise your presence inside the shrine of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) to ask for *tawbah* and cleanse your soul from the evil of sins. This would need to be sincere, performed with remorse over past transgressions but with the commitment not to repeat the sins. As mentioned in the Qur'an (4:64), the intercession of the Holy Prophet (s) and Ahl al-Bayt is an important factor for the forgiveness of sins from Allah (swt). Consider writing down the sins committed in the past, taking this with you to the shrine and mentioning it quietly with a sorrowful heart, seeking penitence and release from the chastisement of hell.
2. Whilst you are in the state of connecting with the *ma'ṣūm* (the error-free holy personality), seek further enlightenment of the soul by performance of recommended prayers such as *Ṣalāt al-layl* (night prayers) as well as the supererogatory daily prayers. Indeed, Imam al-'Askarī (a) establishes that the performance of fifty-one *rak'ahs* (units) daily (which includes the obligatory and recommended prayers) is one of the signs of a true believer.³
3. The Ahl al-Bayt (a) have emphasised the importance of *Ṣalāt al-layl*. A myriad of worldly benefits as well as rewards in the *ākhirah* have been mentioned. For example, 'Prophet Muḥammad (s) said:

² *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 94, p. 49, no. 9.

³ *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*, vol. 6, p. 52.

You must get up for the night prayer, for verily it was the devoted practice of all righteous people before you, and verily night prayer is a means of proximity (to Allah (swt)) as well as something that prevents sin.⁴

Also, 'Imam 'Alī (a) said:

Standing up to pray at night is conducive to the health of the body, is a source of the Lord's pleasure, exposes one to (the descent of) divine mercy, and is adherence to the moral virtues of the Prophets.⁵

Consider giving charity during your *ziyārah*, for it is highly recommended for the acceptance of the deeds as well as forgiveness. Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) has said:

Verily, charity given at night (secretly) extinguishes the wrath of the Lord, wipes away grave sins, and facilitates one's account (on the Day of Resurrection). Charity given during the day makes one's wealth thrive and increases one's lifespan.⁶

4. Pledge to the Imams that you will make a positive change in your life. This may include the stopping of a prohibited act, such as watching forbidden movies or backbiting. The pledge could also entail the execution of good deeds, such as supporting orphans. Reflect on whether you will be a better person going home after *ziyārah*, in terms of righteousness and virtue. Seek inspiration from one aspect of the life of the *ma'ṣūm*, such as a virtue, and draw up a plan to apply that element into your own life. Ask the *ma'ṣūm* to intercede and help you achieve this, as well as grant you another opportunity to perform the *ziyārah* again in the future.
5. Do not be afraid to express your emotions or cry. Allow yourself to be drawn into the love of the Holy Ahl al-Bayt (a). It is highly fruitful to keep the feeling of love and affection strong throughout the journey, to listen to their eulogies and grieve over how they were treated. Write down your experiences and discuss some of them with others. Empty your heart inside the shrine and allow space and time for reflection and contemplation towards a better spiritual life. Express gratitude towards them for their tireless efforts and sacrifice to ensure pure Islam has survived until today.

4 *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, no. 21428.

5 *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 87, p. 143, no. 17.

6 *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 96, p. 125, no. 39.

APPENDIX 1

DEMANDING TO REBUILD, RESTORE, AND PRESERVE

By al-Baqee Organisation

Special Consultative status at the United Nations

Countless examples exist throughout the world of cultures, religions, and societies recognising specific monuments and places with a significance reminiscent of their special moments in history. They may possess various unique characteristics which have historical, archaeological, scientific, cultural, or religious value. The mutual ground they share, however, is the fact that these heritage sites evoke a sentimental attachment for large groups of people. Moreover, governmental institutions recognise such places in their laws and stipulate special considerations for the protection and preservation for future generations. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) maintains an extensive list of World Heritage sites throughout the world.

The Parliament of the United Kingdom (UK) has recognised the protection of monuments and buildings through a set of regulatory acts. A few important ones are listed here:

- Ancient Monuments Protection Act
- Town and Country Planning Act
- National Heritage Act

The UK has also established the 'National Trust', an independent charitable organisation created to manage and care for the heritage sites in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Scotland has its own separate National Trust. The United States of America has a series of similar laws pertaining to the recognition and preservation of heritage, such as the following:

- Antiquities Act
- Historic Sites, Buildings and Antiquities Act
- National Trust for Historical Preservation

- National Historic Preservation Act
- Archaeological Resources Protection Act
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act

The acts set out an extensive set of laws, rules, and policies relating to the recognition, preservation, operation, and appropriate use, as well as, administrative and financial matters for the heritage sites.

Australia has enacted the following similar set of laws:

- The Historic Shipwrecks Act
- Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act
- Australian Heritage Council Act
- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act

A more extensive list of laws of various countries which adhere to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention can be found at the States Parties Ratification Status at the following website: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/>

The recognition of the heritage site has been a simple process overall, yet in some instances a very tumultuous one due to its impact. The party seeking the protection, and the governmental body granting the protection, may undergo the defined process laid out by the country's specific laws – assuming there is a provision to accept and review applications or petitions. Contentions between the canvassers and the government bodies could lead to the escalation of conflict that may result in lawsuits, public petitions, and protests. Furthermore, any lessening of protection rights and resource allocations also inevitably leads to an escalation of conflict.

The intentional destruction or damage through negligence leads to serious ramifications, with potential penalties and criminal injunctions. Individuals and/or organisations with a vested interest in the heritage sites continuously seek ways to secure and preserve them for future generations. The UNESCO registration is for recognition of the sites on the international platform. As mentioned above, each country may have additional laws and regulations that provide special provisions to specific sites. Several of the above-mentioned acts were the results of hard-fought campaigns by groups of individuals and organisations that demanded protections of their sacred sites and who believed in preservation.

The birthplace of Jesus (according to modern Christian thought), is the Church of the Nativity, which is on the World Heritage Site list. The Saint Catherine Area in Egypt is where Prophet Moses is believed to have received the Tablets of the Law. There

are several additional sites in Jerusalem that are recognised as World Heritage sites. The tragic irony for Muslims, however, is that their heritage sites are being wilfully destroyed. Some notable sites represent the important milestones of early Islamic history and require identification, reorganisation, restoration, and preservation.

Actions that need to be taken in order to stop the Wahhabi desecration of Jannat al-Baqi' include the following:

- Stop sponsoring and supporting terrorist organisations. Prevent any funding reaching such organisations through Saudi-based channels.
- Immediately halt the destruction and desecration of shrines, graves, cemeteries, relics and, in good faith, begin the process of rebuilding these sacred sites back to their original beauty.
- Remove harassing personnel from Jannat al-Baqi', especially those who initiate argumentative confrontations with pilgrims paying homage to family members and companions of the Holy Prophet (s).
- Permit women to enter Jannat al-Baqi' and Jannat al-Mu'allā, extend visiting hours and allow pilgrims to recite supplications without any interference.
- Allow Muslims to pay homage and arrange special events to celebrate birthdays and commemorate martyrdoms with respect to the notable personalities buried in Jannat al-Baqi'.

baqee.org

Allah made the obedience of Muslims to us (Abul Bayt) as discipline for the Ummah, and our leadership as safety from differences. - Sayyida Fatima Zehra (sa)	Piety is the gateway to all repentance, and the principal of all wisdom, and the distinction of all deeds. - Imam Hasan Mujtaba (as)	Do not make anyone your enemy even though you consider him harmless and do not turn down a person's friendship even if you think he will not benefit you. - Imam Zaimul Abedin (as)	Our followers are of three kinds, one who follows us but depends on others, one who is like a glass involved in his own reflections, but the best are those who are like gold, the more they suffer the more they shine. - Imam Muhammad Baqir (as)	The person moving to help his Mumin brothers is like the person who is walking between Safa and Marwa. - Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (as)
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APPENDIX 2

POEMS IN REMEMBRANCE OF BAQĪ^c

THEY ALL STILL LIE BROKEN

BY NOURI SARDAR

(8 September 2010)

They all still lie broken . . . and which hand will fix them?

Within them the bodies . . . of Muḥammad's children

O' sword of 'Alī . . . O' Imam Mahdī

Rise in with this time . . . And rebuild Baqī'

* * *

Every tear cries out for your time to appear . . . In your hand justice
And yet hope, Master, is dying with each tear . . . With it our patience
The cries within these graves how often you hear . . . O' last abundance

And we call for its rebuilding every year . . . Toward its brilliance

This is Heaven's garden . . . it's glory unspoken

And toward the whole world . . . its beauty is hidden

Why is truth hidden . . . What a tragedy

Rise up with this time . . . And rebuild Baqī'

* * *

All its beauty left within Muḥammad's word . . . Now but history
In ignorance terrorists this truth concurred . . . Concurred its beauty
Much like the innocent blood their hands have poured . . . And without mercy
This garden of roses in hatred they burned . . . And every body
Their own evil they wished . . . ignored what they were blessed
In spite of 'Alī's cries . . . Baqī' they demolished
By it stood wailing . . . Your father 'Alī
Rise up with this time . . . And rebuild Baqī'

* * *

O' what a belief that preaches such hatred . . . Through shed blood they wade
Upon us this oppression has been weighted . . . Waiting to be saved
To visit this garden your house encouraged . . . Yet it lies in shade
O' light that removes darkness O' awaited . . . From us our hope fades
How can hope be living . . . injustice its breeding
It feeds upon our cries . . . and how much we're crying!
Demolished are graves. Lives taken away
Rise up with this time . . . And rebuild Baqī'

* * *

Do they not understand the weight and the worth . . .?
Of this once graveyard It signified these saints' lives from death till birth . . . For
them an award
Yet like shattered glass to us it was brought forth . . . With blood on each shard
We were born into oppression and with growth . . . This truth made life hard
We grew in a shadow . . . from our wounds our blood flows

Raised with this torn graveyard . . . we were raised in sorrow
We grew in darkness . . . And fate let it be
Rise up with this time . . . And rebuild Baqī'

* * *

They wish to erase your memory from time . . . Of Haider's children
Because in essence, truth, your household define . . . They keep you hidden
And how they call our calling for you a crime . . . What an oppression
'O' Shia you have invented this bloodline . . . An innovation
O' Shia you are cursed . . . with the dead you converse
Your saviour is a myth . . . and your views we shall nurse'
To them we answer . . . He will set us free
Rise up with this time . . . And rebuild Baqī'

* * *

Do we have such innocence that we cry out . . . Cry for your return
When within our hearts sits our sin and our doubt . . . Our goodness it burns
And yet so thirsty as if living in drought . . . To quench it we yearn
Every tear that flows down our cheeks for you shouts . . . Where else would we turn?
Under light of the moon . . . lie broken do these tombs
And yet the moon cries out . . . 'Shia he will come soon!'
And beneath its light . . . Sits alone Baqī'
Rise up with this time . . . And rebuild Baqī'

LOVE'S OCEAN

BY ABIR SAFA
(13 February 2017)

Through oceans I travel wishing to meet you
I stand below the ocean waves that bring me to you
I crawl beneath your dust as I say goodbye
To the dome that once rose upon each and every eye

* * *

I stand with no breath to be taken away
I stand far from you, as they take your names
We fall with your dome that will soon rise again
Though I don't know how or even when

* * *

I can't imagine the sorrow of her hidden grave
How dare they take all of her remains
We fall far from there wishing to be found
Lord take us to them, bury us within their shroud

* * *

If the world knew what was in its grasp
All nations would stand together and ask
How dare they remove the dome beneath our skies
We stand here firm still asking why

* * *

Don't forget the one who stands over their graves
With one flag in one hand salutes all he will save
Find me by their names with his love engraved
Don't forget the one who stands over their graves
With one flag in one hand salutes all he will save
Find me by their names with his love engraved

We await the day he will open the heavens and pray over the ocean and the open
skies,

We've seen it all reveal before our eyes
We wondered about catastrophes,
As this became the peak of history

* * *

I wondered, again, as to when we'll see
The banner of yours fall through the seas
Swimming along those who wish to be free
Of oppression caused by their monarchy

* * *

Again, we roam through familiar spaces
Seeing dreams of all familiar faces
We reunited in a world with domes over mountains
Departing from sinful oceans . . .
Be free, be free
O' those of Baqī'

THE SUN SETS

BY NOURI SARDAR

(8 September 2011)

With each day the sun sets . . . the earth cries your name

As its eye turns to you . . . a moth to a flame

Mahdī . . . Mahdī . . .

O' Lord hasten the return of Mahdī

* * *

Upon Medina's lands . . . a wrong moon perches

Armed with arrows that search . . . for Mahdī's praises

Above destroyed Baqī' . . . its darkness lurches

At each trace of goodness . . . its evil gazes

Mahdī . . . Mahdī . . .

O' Lord hasten the return of Mahdī

* * *

A once beautiful dome . . . on its tenants weeps

With each gravestone ashamed . . . its honour it reaps

Blood trickles from your eye . . . he who never sleeps

O Mahdī from this eye . . . your fury it seeps

Mahdī . . . Mahdī . . .

O' Lord hasten the return of Mahdī

* * *

Once a garden of lights . . . sits darkened, haunted
Bodies of your household . . . cannot be counted
Why when upon your throne . . . a devil's mounted
Do you remain unseen . . . and you are taunted?

Mahdī . . . Mahdī . . .

O' Lord hasten the return of Mahdī



APPENDIX 3

ZIYARAH OF THE IMAMS OF BAQĪ'

- Permission to enter -

يَا مَوَالِيَّ يَا أَبْنَاءَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ

yā mawāliyya yā abnā'a rasūli allāhi

O my masters, sons of the Messenger of Allah

عَبْدُكُمْ وَابْنُ أَمَتِكُمْ

`abdukuṃ wabnu amatikum

I – your servant and the son of your maid

الذَّلِيلُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ

aldhdhalīlu bayna aydīkuṃ

who stands submissively before you

وَالْمُضْعَفُ فِي عُلُوِّ قَدْرِكُمْ

walmuḍ`īfu fī `uluwwi qadrikum

who is worth nothing in comparison with your elevated esteem

وَالْمُعْتَرِفُ بِحَقِّكُمْ

walmu`tarīfu biḥaqqikum

and who admits your right (that is incumbent upon us)

جَاءَكُمْ مُسْتَجِيرًا بِكُمْ

jā'akum mustajīran bikum

I have come to you, seeking your shelter

قاصِدًا إِلَى حَرَمِكُمْ
qāṣidan ilā ḥaramikum
heading for your sanctuary

مُتَقَرِّبًا إِلَى مَقَامِكُمْ
mutaqarriban ilā maqāmikum
seeking nearness to Your statuses

مُتَوَسِّلًا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى بِكُمْ
mutawassilan ilā allāhi ta`ālā bikum
and beseeching Allah in your names

أَدْخُلْ يَا مَوَالِيَّ
a'adkhulu yā mawāliyya
May I enter, O my masters?

أَدْخُلْ يَا أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ
a'adkhulu yā awliyā'a allāhi
May I enter, O intimate servants of Allah?

أَدْخُلْ يَا مَلَائِكَةَ اللَّهِ الْمُحْدِقِينَ بِهَذَا الْحَرَمِ الْمُقِيمِينَ بِهَذَا الْمَشْهَدِ
a'adkhulu yā malā'ikatā allāhi almuḥdiqīnā bihādhā alḥarami
almuqīmīna bihādhā almasshadi
May I enter, O Allah's angels who surround this sanctuary and
reside in this shrine?

*After you attain reverence, submission, and tender-heartedness, you may enter the
shrine with your right foot, and say the following:*

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ كَبِيرًا

allāhu akbaru kabīran
Allah is greatly the Greatest

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَثِيرًا

walḥamdu lillāhi kathīran
all praise be to Allah abundantly

وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا

wa subḥāna allāhi bukratan wa aṣīlan
glory be to Allah in morns and eves

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الْفَرْدِ الصَّمَدِ

walḥamdu lillāhi alḥadi alṣṣamadi
all praise be to Allah, the Single, the Absolute

الْمَاجِدِ الْأَحَدِ الْمُتَفَضِّلِ الْمَنَّانِ

almājidi al-aḥadi, almutafaḍḍili almannāni
the Glorious, the One and Only, the All-obliging, the All-
benefactor

الْمُتَطَوِّلِ الْحَنَّانِ الَّذِي مَنَّ بِطَوَّلِهِ

almutatawwili alḥannāni, alladhī manna biṭawlihī
the Donor, the All-compassionate, Who conferred (upon us) with
His bequests

وَسَهَّلَ زِيَارَةَ سَادَاتِي بِإِحْسَانِهِ

wa sahhala ziyārata sādātī bi'ihṣānihī
Who has made easy for me to visit my masters out of His beneficence

وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِي عَنْ زِيَارَتِهِمْ مَمْنُوعًا

wa lam yaj`alnī `an ziyāratihim mamnū`an

Who has not included me with those who are prevented from
visiting them;

بَلْ تَطَوَّلَ وَمَنَحَ

bal taṭawwala wa manaḥarather

He has bestowed upon me and donated me (this favour)

- The Ziyarah -

*You may then move toward their tombs, face them, turn the back to the kiblah
direction, and say the following:*

الْسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَئِمَّةَ الْهُدَى

alssalāmu `alaykum a`immata alhudā

Peace be upon you, O Leaders of true guidance!

الْسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ التَّقْوَى

alssalāmu `alaykum ahla alṭtaqwā

Peace be upon you, O people of piety!

الْسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْحُجَجُ عَلَى أَهْلِ الدُّنْيَا

alssalāmu `alaykum ayyuhā alḥujaju `alā ahli alddunyā

Peace be upon you, O Arguments against the inhabitants of this
world!

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْقَوَّامُ فِي الْبَرِّيَّةِ بِالْقِسْطِ

alssalāmu `alaykum ayyuhā alquwwāmu fī albariyyati bilqisṭi

Peace be upon you, O maintainers of justice over people!

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الصَّفْوَةِ

alssalāmu `alaykum ahla alṣṣafwati

Peace be upon you, O choicest people!

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ آلَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ

alssalāmu `alaykum āla rasūli allāhi

Peace be upon you, O members of the Household of Allah's
Messenger!

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ النَّجْوَى

alssalāmu `alaykum ahla alnnajwā

Peace be upon you, O people of private whispers [with angels]!

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكُمْ قَدْ بَلَّغْتُمْ وَنَصَحْتُمْ

ashhadu annakum qad ballaghtum wa naṣaḥtum

I bear witness that you did convey, offer advice

وَصَبَرْتُمْ فِي ذَاتِ اللَّهِ

wa ṣabartum fī dhāti allāhi

endure for the sake of Allah

وَكُذِّبْتُمْ وَأُسِيءَ إِلَيْكُمْ فَغْفَرْتُمْ

wa kudhdbtum wa usī'a ilaykum faghafartum
and forgive when you were belied and maltreated

وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّكُمْ الْأَئِمَّةُ الرَّاشِدُونَ الْمُهْتَدُونَ

wa ashhadu annakumu al-a'immatu alrrāshidūna almuhtadūna
I also bear witness that you are the upright, well-guided Leaders,

وَأَنَّ طَاعَتَكُمْ مَفْرُوضَةٌ

wa anna ṭā`atakum mafrūḍatun
that obedience to you is obligatory

وَأَنَّ قَوْلَكُمْ الصِّدْقُ

wa anna qawlakumu alṣṣidqu
that your words are true

وَأَنَّكُمْ دَعَوْتُمْ فَلَمْ تُجَابُوا

wa annakum da`awtum falam tujābū
that you had called [to Allah] but you were not answered

وَأَمَرْتُمْ فَلَمْ تُطَاعُوا

wa amartum falam tuṭā`ū
that you had enjoined [virtue] but you were not obeyed,

وَأَنَّكُمْ دَعَائِمُ الدِّينِ وَأَرْكَانُ الْأَرْضِ

wa annakum da`ā'imū alddīni wa arkānu al-arḍi
and that you are the supports of the religion and the foundations
of the earth

لَمْ تَزَالُوا بِعَيْنِ اللَّهِ

lam tazālū bi`ayni allāhi
You were always under the sight of Allah

يَنْسَخُكُمْ مِنْ أَصْلَابِ كُلِّ مُطَهَّرٍ

yansakhukum min aṣlābi kulli muṭahharin

Who moved you from the loins of purified men

وَيَنْقُلُكُمْ مِنْ أَرْحَامِ الْمُطَهَّرَاتِ

wa yanqulukum min arḥāmi almuṭahharāti

to the wombs of purified women

لَمْ تَدْنَسْكُمْ الْجَاهِلِيَّةُ الْجَهْلَاءُ

lam tudanniskumu aljāhiliyyatu aljahlā'u

the benighted ignorance could not stain you

وَلَمْ تَشْرَكَ فِيكُمْ فِتْنُ الْأَهْوَاءِ

wa lam tashrak fikum fitanu al-ahwā'i

and the whimsical sedition could not tempt you

طَبَّتُمْ وَطَابَ مَنَبَتُكُمْ

ṭibtum wa ṭāba manbatukum

rejoice! Your origin is goodly!

مَنْ بِكُمْ عَلَيْنَا دَيَّاؤُ الدِّينِ

manna bikum `alaynā dayyānu alddīni

The King of the religion has conferred upon us with the grace of
our acknowledgment of you;

فَجَعَلَكُمْ فِي بُيُوتٍ

faja`alakum fī buyūtin

He therefore caused you to be in houses

أَذِنَ اللَّهُ أَنْ تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ

adhina allāhu an turfa`a wa yudhkarā fihā ismuhū
which He [i.e., Allah] has permitted to be exalted and that His
Name may be mentioned therein

وَجَعَلَ صَلَاتِنَا عَلَيْكُمْ

wa ja`ala ṣalātānā `alaykum
and He has decided our invocations of blessings upon you

رَحْمَةً لَنَا وَكَفَّارَةً لِدُنُوبِنَا

raḥmatan lanā wa kaffāratan lidhunūbinā
to be a mercy on us and to be granting remission of our sins

إِذْ اخْتَارَكُمْ اللَّهُ لَنَا

idhi ikhtārakumu allāhu lanā
Allah has chosen you for us

وَطَيَّبَ خَلْقَنَا بِمَا مَنَّ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ وِلَايَتِكُمْ

wa ṭayyaba khalqanā bimā manna `alaynā min wilāyatikum
and has purified our creation through the grace of our loyalty to
your [Divinely commissioned] Leadership with which He has
conferred upon us

وَكُنَّا عِنْدَهُ مُسَمِّينَ بِعِلْمِكُمْ

wa kunnā `indahū musammīna bi`ilmikum
we have thus become endeared to Him

مُعْتَرِفِينَ بِتَصَدِيقِنَا إِيَّاكُمْ

mu` tarifīna bitaṣḍīqinā iyyākum

due to our acknowledgement of you and our giving credence to
you

وَهَذَا مَقَامٌ مَنْ أَسْرَفَ وَأَخْطَأَ

wa hādhā maqāmu man asrafa wa akhta'a

so, this is the situation of him who has committed mistakes and
sins

وَأَسْتَكَانَ وَأَقْرَبَمَا جَنَى

wastakāna wa aqarra bimā janā

shown submission [to you], and confessed of what he had
committed

وَرَجَا بِمَقَامِهِ الْخَلَاصَ

wa rajā bimaqāmihi alkhalāṣa

hence, being in this situation, I hope for redemption

وَأَنْ يَسْتَنْقِذَهُ بِكُمْ مُسْتَنْقِذُ الْهَلَكَى مِنَ الرَّدَى

wa an yastanqidhahū bikum mustanqidhū alhalkā min alrradā
and I hope that the Saviour of the perishing ones from perdition
may save me in your names

فَكُونُوا لِي شُفَعَاءَ

fakūnū lī shufa` ā'a

so, [please] be my interceders,

فَقَدْ وَفَدْتُ إِلَيْكُمْ

faqad wafadtu ilaykum
for I have come to you

إِذْ رَغِبَ عَنْكُمْ أَهْلُ الدُّنْيَا

idh raghiba `ankum ahlū alddunyā
when the people of this world abandoned you

وَاتَّخَذُوا آيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوءًا

wattakhadhū āyāti allāhi huzwan
took the Signs of Allah for a jest

وَأَسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا

wastakbaru anha
and turned away from them haughtily

You may then raise your head toward the sky and say the following:

يَا مَنْ هُوَ قَائِمٌ لَا يَنْسُهُو

yā man huwa qā'imun lā yashū
O He Who is Self-Subsisting and never forgets

وَدَائِمٌ لَا يَلْهُو

wa dā'imun lā yalhū
Who is Ever-living and never becomes heedless

وَمُحِيطٌ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ

wa muhīṭun bikulli shay'in
and Who encompasses all things!

لَكَ الْمُنُّ بِمَا وَفَّقْتَنِي

laka almannu bimā waffaqtanī

to You is all gratitude for that You have guided me (to this)

وَعَرَفْتَنِي بِمَا أَقَمْتَنِي عَلَيْهِ

wa `arraftanī bimā aqamtanī `alayhi

and You have introduced to me that on which I rest

إِذْ صَدَّ عَنْهُ عِبَادُكَ

idh ṣadda `anhu `ibāduka

when Your servants diverted from it

وَجَهِلُوا مَعْرِفَتَهُ

wa jahilū ma`rifatahū

ignored the recognition of it

وَأَسْتَخَفُّوا بِحَقِّهِ

wastakhaffū biḥaqqihī

belittled its right

وَمَائِلُوا إِلَى سِوَاهُ

wa mālū ilā siwāhu

and inclined to elsewhere

فَكَانَتْ الْمِنَّةُ مِنْكَ عَلَيَّ

fakānat alminnatu minka `alayya

hence, You have conferred upon me with this favour

مَعَ أَقْوَامٍ خَصَّصْتَهُمْ بِمَا خَصَّصْتَنِي بِهِ
ma`a aqwāmin khaṣaṣtahum bimā khaṣaṣtanī bihī
as well as upon other people whom You have granted exclusively the same

فَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ إِذْ كُنْتُ عِنْدَكَ
falaka alḥamdu idh kuntu `indaka
so, all praise be to You, for I have been

فِي مَقَامِي هَذَا مَذْكُورًا مَكْتُوبًا
fī maqāmī hādhā madhkūran maktūban
mentioned and written with You due to the situation in which I am now

فَلَا تَحْرِمْنِي مَا رَجَوْتُ
falā taḥrimnī mā rajawtu
hence, [please] do not deprive me of what I long for

وَلَا تُخَيِّبْنِي فِيمَا دَعَوْتُ
wa lā tukhayyibnī fī mā da`awtu
and do not disappoint me as regards my supplication;

بِحُرْمَةِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ الطَّاهِرِينَ
biḥurmati muḥammadin wa ālihī alṭṭāhirīna
[please do so] in the name of the sanctity of Muḥammad and his
immaculate Household

وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ
wa ṣallā allāhu `alā muḥammadin wa āli muḥammadin
may Allah send blessings upon Muḥammad and the Household
of Muḥammad

You may now pray to Almighty Allah for anything you want. In Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī says: 'You may then offer the ziyārah prayer (ṣalāt al-ziyārah) in eight units; each two units are for one of the (four) Imams.' Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs say that if you want to bid farewell to the four Imams, you may say the following:

- Bidding Farewell -

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَئِمَّةَ الْهُدَى وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

alssalāmu `alaykum a'imмата alhudā wa raḥmatu allāhi wa
barakātuhū

Peace and Allah's mercy and blessings be upon you, O leaders to
the true guidance!

أَسْتَوْدِعُكُمْ اللَّهَ وَأَقْرَأُ عَلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامَ

astawdi`ukumu allāha wa aqra'u `alaykumu alssalāma

I entrust you with Allah and send salutations to you

أَمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالرَّسُولِ

āmannā billāhi wa bilrrasūli

we believe in Allah and in the Messenger

وَبِمَا جِئْتُمْ بِهِ وَدَلَّلْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ

wa bimā ji'tum bihī wa dalaltum `alayhi

and in that which you have conveyed and that to which you have
guided

اَللّٰهُمَّ فَاکْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِیْنَ

allāhumma fāktubnā ma`a alshshāhidīna

O Allah: then write us down among those who bear witness!

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